

*Studies*  
*in*  
*Indian*  
*Epigraphy*

*(Bhāratīya Puṛābhilēkha Patrikā)*

VOLUME XXVI, 2000



PUBLISHED ON BEHALF OF  
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JOURNAL OF THE EPIGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

Volume XXVI, 2000

Executive Editor

M. D. SAMPATH

Editor

S. SUBRAMONIA IYER



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This Volume is Dedicated  
to  
**(Late) Sri N. SETHURAMAN**  
*Industrialist, Philanthropist and Epigraphist*  
who nurtured and patronised  
the Society year after year

# EPIGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

## MYSORE

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## *Editorial*

It is really with a sense of pride and satisfaction that we are placing in the hands of our members the XXVI Volume of our Journal.

The Journal is devoted to the publication of original research papers of the scholars who participated in the deliberations held at Udupi. That the Society has been able to bring out its journal, for twenty-six years now, without any break, is no mean achievement. This has been rendered possible due to the cooperation and support we have received from the Office-Bearers and Members of the Executive Committee besides the members of the Society.

It is our duty to express our gratitude to the Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhana Kendra, Udupi, to the authorities of the Academy of General Education, Manipal, and to the MGM College, Udupi, on account of whose efforts, the last conference achieved grand success.

We are deeply grateful to our Chairman and renowned epigraphist, Dr. S. H. Ritti, and to Dr. K. V. Ramesh, a renowned epigraphist and General Secretary, for their guidance in the conduct of the activities of the Society and in placing it on a firm footing.

We are also thankful to our treasurer, Sri P. Natarajan, who has spared no pains in maintaining the accounts, etc. and to Dr. T. S. Ravishankar for helping us in correcting the proofs of this volume.

Our thanks are also due to the staff of the Office of the Director (Epigraphy) for their continuous and whole-hearted support in carrying out the various activities of the Society.

We would be failing in our duty if we did not thank Sri S. K. Lakshminarayana of Readyprint and his staff including Ms. S. Uma, Sri Shyam, Sri Manjunath and Sri Prasad ; Sri M. Sathyanarayana Rao and brothers of Geetha Book House, Mysore, our publishers ; and Sri Sadguru Printers for all their help and assistance in getting this volume out on time.

**M. D. Sampath**

*Executive Editor*

**S. Subramonia Iyer**

*Editor*

Mysore 570 005

April 21, 2000

# Editorial

It is not a new thing for a book illustration to be put in the hands of an artist who is not a member of our society.

The book "The History of the Negro in America" by Carter G. Woodson, published by the American Historical Association, is a fine example of this. The book is a history of the Negro in America, from the time of the first Negro to the present. It is a book that is well written and well illustrated. The illustrations are by a number of artists, including some who are not members of our society.

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We are also thankful to our members, Dr. W. H. Rouse, who has given us his picture of the Negro in America, and to Dr. T. S. Rouse, who has given us his picture of the Negro in America.

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M. D. Sampson  
Executive Editor  
S. Subramanian Iyer  
Editor

April 1, 1938

## Presidential Address

S. R. Goyal

I AM EXTREMELY thankful and indebted to the membres and Executive Committee of the Epigraphical Society of India for their kindness in electing me as the General President of the Silver Jubilee Congress of the Society. I deem it a great honour and privilege. The high office of the General President of the Society has been held in the past by a galaxy of scholars in comparison to whom my work in this branch of Indology has been extremely modest. Though I am a devoted student of ancient Indian history, and have written a few monographs on ancient Indian inscriptions also, but I make no claim to specialisation and intensive research in epigraphy. I, therefore, cannot but feel grateful to the members and Executive committee of the Epigraphical Society for the conferment of this distinction. I hope that with the guidance of senior colleagues and with the help of all of you, which I am sure would be coming forth in an ample measure, I will be able to discharge my responsibilities satisfactorily.

The fact that the Silver Jubilee Congress of the Epigraphical Society is being held under the auspicious of the Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhan Kendra, M.G.M.College, in the sacred city of Udupi is indeed very happy, for this city is associated with the name of Lord Krishna who occupies so prominent a place in Hindu religion, mythology and history and also with the name of the great *āchārya* Madhva who propagated and spread the philosophy of Dvaita. I may remind you, ladies and gentlemen, that is, is not for the first time that Udupi is hosting an Annual Session of the Epigraphical Society. Indeed it was in this very city the Third Session of the Society was also held which was presided over by the late Professor T.V.Mahalingam, an extraordinary scholar of great repute.

The themes of the addresses of my illustrious predecessors have varied according to their interest and inclination. While

some of the General Presidents, specially the early ones, reviewed the progress of Indian epigraphy from the time its study began, others made a review of the work done in this field in the year preceding their address. Still others chose to give their learned views mainly on some problems of interdisciplinary nature such as the relationship of epigraphy with literature or archaeology or some problem in which they felt more interested such as the decipherment of the Indus script, in order to share their ideas with the delegates. It gave them an opportunity to explain or reiterate their views on the topic selected by them with additional arguments and clarifications. I myself desire to restrict my observations, with your permission ladies and gentlemen, mainly on some aspects of Aśokan epigraphy and palaeography.

The study of Aśokan epigraphy commenced when James Prinsep deciphered the Brāhmī script used in the Aśokan edicts. Since then it has steadily progressed and numerous monumental works, apart from almost countless papers, have been published on it. In the post-1947 era itself dozens of Aśokan epigraphs have come to light and scholars, both Indian and of other countries, devoted to Aśokan studies are passionately working on them and expressing their views in their learned papers and monographs. Among the more interesting Aśokan edicts recently found are included those which were discovered in the North-Western parts of the sub-continent and in Karnataka. They have been published and discussed by eminent scholars individually and in collated studies (e.g. D.C.Sircar, *Aśokan Studies*, 1979; B.N.Mukherjee, *Studies in Aramaic Edicts of Aśoka*, Calcutta, 1984; P.K.Andersen, *Studies in the Minor Edicts of Aśoka*, I Critical Ed., Freiburg, 1990). Sitting at present as we are in Karnataka, here a special reference may be made to the *Early Brāhmī Inscriptions from Sannati* (Delhi, 1993) by I.K.Sharma and J.Varaprasad Rao. The discovery of the Two Separate Edicts from Sannati is of singular importance because on the one hand it demolishes the view that the Separate Edicts were meant only for Kalinga and, on the other, raises several questions which cannot be answered in the present state of our knowledge.

The study of ancient Indian inscriptions is closely bound down with palaeography, the science of scripts. This is more so in the case of Aśokan inscriptions because the history of Indian scripts starts with Brāhmī used in the majority of his records and no Brāhmī inscription which may be indisputably assigned to the pre-Aśokan era has been discovered so far. This poses the interesting question of the origin of this script, a question which has received the attention of scholars since the beginning of palaeographical studies in India. As all of us know, numerous theories regarding the origin of Brāhmī have been propounded by the Western and Indian scholars both. I hereby propose to reinstate and clarify my suggestion that the Brāhmī script was invented in or shortly before the reign of Aśoka and barring the North-Western parts of the sub-continent art of writing was unknown in India in the post-Indus pre-Aśokan period. I submitted this suggestion before the scholars some years ago.<sup>1</sup> Since then I have received both support and criticism for the theory I propounded. I, therefore, seek your indulgence, ladies and gentlemen, to clarify some of the issues and examine the critical observations made in this connection.

But first of all I should present before you what I may call my preliminary case. It is based on two lines of evidence :

Firstly, there is a complete absence of any inscription assignable to the period between the end of the Indus Civilization and the inscriptions of Aśoka. As India is a vast sub-continent and much spade work has been done in the last decades this time-gap of over one thousand years cannot be easily explained away. Some graffiti on potsherds have indeed been found which have been assigned to early Maurya period, but they cannot be dated exactly. In any case, they cannot be made the basis for any far reaching conclusion.

Secondly, Megasthenes, who visited India in 300 B.C. states that Indians of his day did not have any written letters. In his *Geographicon* Strabo quotes Megasthenes thus: "Megasthenes says that when he was in the camp of Sandra cottus (Chandragupta Maurya), although the number in camp was forty thousand, he on no day saw reports of stolen articles that were worth more than two hundred drachmae; and that too among a people who use unwritten laws only. For, he continues, they have no knowledge of written letters and

regulate every single thing from memory; but still they fare happily because of their simplicity and their frugality ....”<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the two lines of evidence the physical fact of the absence of written documents in the pre-Aśokan times for as many as fifteen centuries and the testimony of Megasthenes who explicitly states that Indians did not have any written letters in 300 B.C., – converge on one point and very strongly suggest that the Aśokan Brāhmī made a sudden appearance and hence, was invented sometime in the reign of Bindusāra or, what is more likely, in the early years of the reign of Aśoka himself.

But there are other evidences as well which support this view. It is now generally admitted that there are no regional variations in the Aśokan Brāhmī. In other words, if we try to trace the history of Brāhmī backwards we cannot go further back than the age of Aśoka not only because of the absence of any inscriptions but also because the Aśokan script is uniform throughout the country, and a further decrease in regional variations is out of question. The primitive simplicity of the forms of Aśokan letters also indicates the same. Further, it is generally recognised that the Brāhmī alphabet as well as the formation of many of its individual letters follow the rules of Sanskrit grammar and phonology. It proves two points – firstly, it means that this script came into existence after the development of Sanskrit grammar and not *vice versa*; and secondly, that it was invented at a particular point of time and was not the result of evolution. Cunningham pointed out that a large number of Brāhmī letters are the pictorial representations of material objects, such as *ka* representing the figure of *kripana*, *dha* of *dhanu*, *ch* of *chamas*, and so on. It also suggests that Brāhmī was invented and did not evolve. The facts that many Brāhmī letters are derived from some basic or primary form (such as the form of *chha* from *cha* and that in some cases the same form is used with a change in orientation of two letters (such as the forms of *la* and *ha*) also point to its invention, and not evolution.<sup>3</sup>

My suggestion regarding the origin of Brāhmī has three components –

- a) the art of writing was not known in India during the Vedic and early Buddhist periods except in the

North-Western regions where the scripts prevalent in Iran must have been used, and barring a few individuals of the Madhyadēśa and other regions who went to Taxila for their education and became acquainted with Aramaic, Greek and other scripts prevalent in the Iranian empire, for Taxila region was, in the age of the Achaeminids, a part of the Iranian empire:

- b) The Aśokan Brāhmī was not the result of an evolution; rather it was invented at a particular time; and
- c) this invention took place after the visit of Megasthenes to India in c. 300 B.C. and before Aśoka who got his edicts engraved in this script.

For me, it has been indeed heartening that a number of scholars have accepted the above - mentioned suggestions, fully or partially.<sup>4</sup> However, others have raised some objections against it.<sup>5</sup> Some have argued that all archaeological finds are chance discoveries and hence the possibility of the discovery of earlier Brāhmī epigraphs cannot be ruled out. But here we are not discussing the availability of the coins or inscriptions of this or that king (A.M. Shastri actually cites the case of the coins of Simuka which have by chance now come to light). Here we are discussing the complete absence of inscriptions from a sub - continent for a period of over one thousand years. This complete absence of written documents is not as small a matter as the non-availability of the coins of Simuka.

Those who believe that the Vedic Aryans knew the art of writing insist that non-availability of the inscriptions of the Vedic age is merely *argumentum ex-silentio* (*anupalab-dhi pramāṇa* of Indian logic). But that is rather a strange position to adopt. It is quite easy to understand that the absence of something cannot be proved by positive evidence. If somebody claims to own a hundred rupee note he can prove it by showing the note to us. But if we tell somebody that he owns a hundred rupee note when he actually does not have it, he cannot contradict us by positive evidence. Similar is the present case, for if the art of writing was not known in pre-Aśokan India, its absence cannot be proved by positive evidence.

However, there is one line of evidence which can prove that a society did not have a script till a particular point of time and that is the testimony of somebody who himself knows what a

script is and after visiting that society reports to the effect that the society under discussion was illiterate. This is precisely what Megasthenes has done.

Many explanations have been attempted by the believers in the existence of the art of writing in the Vedic age to explain the absence of inscriptions in the pre-Aśokan period. Some of them have postulated the continuance of the Indus script in the Vedic age. They argue that the Harappan characters survived through the grafiti marks found practically all over India from 3000 B.C. through 300 A.D. and later.<sup>6</sup> But there is absolutely no coherence in the sequence of their occurrence, the only hallmark that makes a regular writing system different from individual symbols or marks of identification.

Some scholars have argued that prior to 300 B.C. all records were written only on perishable materials. But it is also a situation quite difficult to conceive, for once a script is born it never confines itself to one medium - clay, bone, stone, metal all are used, though at any given point of time one medium may have been used more extensively than the other, but never exclusively.

Some scholars agree with our suggestion that the Brāhmī script was invented or created at a particular time but fail to disentangle themselves from the clutches of the misinterpreted literary tradition regarding the prevalence of writing in the pre-Maurya India and postulate the existence of a pre-Aśokan Brāhmī script about the name or nature of which they have nothing at all to tell.<sup>7</sup>

Some have tried to prove the prevalence of Brāhmī before Aśoka by assigning certain inscriptions to the pre-Aśokan period. (*viz.*, the Eran coin-legend, the Bhaṭṭiprōlu relic-casket inscriptions, the Taxila coin Brāhmī-legend, the Mahasthan stone-plaque inscriptions, the Sohgaoura copper-plate inscription, the Piprahwa Buddhist-vase inscription, and the Badli inscription) which, according to them, belong to the pre-Aśokan period and, therefore, prove that writing was known in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C. But these inscriptions are very small, two to them being merely coin-legends. They are not dated and palaeographically they have been assigned to the late-Maurya or post-Maurya periods by other competent epigraphists like D.C. Sircar.<sup>8</sup> Here it may

be noted that the practice of issuing inscribed coins commenced in India in the second century B.C. and was the result of the Greek influence on our culture. The belief that the Badli inscription is dated in the 84th year of the Mahāvīra Era and thus belongs to the fifth century B.C. is rightly regarded as baseless, for no such era was in existence in that period.<sup>9</sup>

In his Presidential Address to the 8th session of the Epigraphical Society Shri K.G. Krishnan criticised the general assumptions that the Brāhmī script came to the south from the north and that the Chōḷas, Chēras and Pāṇḍyas, the contemporaries of Aśoka, did not have any script. He points out that Brāhmī is found used in the Jaina cave and cavern inscriptions of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tiruchchirappalli and Tirunelveli Districts of Tamil Nadu, far away from the find-spots of the Aśokan edicts in Karnataka and Andhra. But Dani has dated these inscriptions from the beginning of the Christian era, a view with which Krishnan of course does not agree. He rather holds that a basic alphabet common to whole of India had already developed before the age of Aśoka and it was adapted to the demands of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Tamil with extended or derived forms for writing the special letters in the respective regions. But this view assumes such a high degree of cultural unity in the sub-continent before the age of Aśoka which one finds almost impossible to imagine. It is generally believed that Indian literary tradition believes the testimony of Megasthenes and proves the existence of the art of writing in Pre-Maurya India. But that is not a fact. There is no doubt that the Pali canon contains explicit references to the game of *akkharikā* (the game of recognising letters written with fingers either on one's own back or in the sky), letters both private and official, written royal proclamations, *inapannas* or bonds, *pothakas* or books, *pattrakas* or manuscripts, *lekha* or *lekhana* or pen etc. But it is also definitely known that the Buddhist canonical texts were still being composed and revised in the reign of Aśoka and this process continued down to the period of Vattaḡamiṇī of Ceylon (29 B.C.). Therefore it is difficult to say whether the portions of this literature referring to writing are pre-Aśokan or post-Aśokan.

Further, the Pali canon itself tends to show that the early Buddhist society was illiterate. Firstly, according to the Vinaya

texts the First Buddhist Council was convened immediately after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha for the preservation of the scattered sayings of the Master relating to Dhamma and Vinaya by their *saṅgāyanā* or recitation. Now, the participants of this Council belonged to the highest strata of the contemporary Indian society. If they were a literate people, they would have put the teachings of their Master into black and white. But it was much long afterwards in the Ceylonese Council convened by Vaṭṭagāmiṇī in 29 B.C., that the Canon was given a written form so that it was not lost or corrupted. Secondly, it is obvious that it was not lost or corrupted. Secondly, it is obvious that if books were known and used in the pre-Aśokan India, they would have played an important role in the daily life of the monks. Now, the extant rules of discipline (*vinaya*) clearly enumerate every moveable thing down to shoes, razors, needles, nail-cutters, dusters, etc., which a monk was permitted to possess. What is more, even the articles in ordinary use among laymen but not allowed to the monks are also enumerated. But nowhere do we find mention of books or manuscripts. Thirdly, it is obvious from numerous passages that the idea of recording by writing even one *suttanta* did not occur to the men who composed the canonical texts.<sup>10</sup> These are very significant facts because one cannot imagine that references which portray the highest strata of the Indian society as illiterate were incorporated into the Buddhist canon in the post-Aśokan period when literacy had become fairly widespread in India. Then to which period do they belong? The answer is simple enough. This vast literature was composed in a period stretching from 483 B.C. to 29 B.C. and the reign of Aśoka, whose edicts are the earliest available Indian documents, falls in between these two dates. It can, therefore, be easily surmised that it is the pre-Aśokan society which is depicted as illiterate in the Pali canon.

Many post-Vedic Sanskrit works such as the *Aśṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini, the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya and the *Dharmasūtras* of Vasishṭha, Viṣṇu and Gautama, the evidence of which is regarded as relevant to the problem under discussion, definitely refer to the art of writing. But it must be remembered that some of these works (such as the *Arthaśāstra*) are of doubtful antiquity (I myself believe that the *Arthaśāstra*)

acquired its present form sometime in the third Century A.D.<sup>11</sup> and in some cases (such as the *Ashtādhyāyī* which was composed in the North-West) their evidence cannot be applied to the whole country.

As regards the Vedic literature their evidence on this question is problematical. It is generally believed that the Vedic texts were not subjected to interpolations in the later periods. How far this belief is correct, I do not know. However, probably it is true the early Vedic texts do not make an explicit mention to writing. Even the supporters of the hoary antiquity of the Indian art of writing either cite references to writing from those Vedic texts which are of doubtful antiquity or were revised later on or argue that the prevalence of the various kinds of meters (*chhandas*), references to high numerical figures in the Vedic literature and such other things imply the existence of writing. Such vague and indirect evidence loses all validity when we find that the Buddhist literature depicts the pre-Aśokan society as illiterate.

Some scholars have appealed to our emotions rather than reason in order to prove the antiquity of writing in India. For example, it has been asked whether the testimony of Megasthenes should stand in the way of our accepting the story of Rāma's ring containing his name or of the letter of Rukmiṇī to Vāsudēva-Kṛishṇa. The argument is obviously more emotional than rational. It first assumes that Rāma and Kṛishṇa flourished in the Vedic age and then ascribes to them some episodes narrated in the epics which were given their present form in the centuries preceding and following the beginning of the Christian era without giving any consideration to the fact that not only interpolations but large scale enlargement - *samupabṛihana* - took place in the epics for centuries. Even today if we narrate a story to a person in which a king sends a 'message' to another king, and the story is recounted by two or three persons successively, in all likelihood the word 'message' will become 'letter' without anybody noticing the change. Therefore, I appeal to my friends not to utilise the literary data unscrupulously. To do so would be no more than trying to prove a doubtful point by another doubtful point.

It has been rightly pointed out that a late development of a script with a long lacunae from the Harappan period may have

been because the Brāhmaṇas relied on the oral tradition. As is well-known, the system of oral teaching and transmission of texts from one generation to another, so characteristic of Indian system of education and learning, is a legacy of the Vedic age. This system worked quite successfully in the Vedic and Early Buddhist periods. For, not only the works written in matrical form but also those written in prose and even dictionaries and indices were transmitted from one generation to another orally. A passage of the *Āṅguttara* (2.147) states :

“Those *Bhikṣhus* who have learnt much (literally, heard much, to whom the tradition has been handed on, who carry (in their memory) the doctrine and discipline, and the indices thereto (that is the tables of contents drawn upto assist the memory) they (those *Bhikṣhus*) may not be careful to make others repeat some *suttanta*, and so when they themselves have passed away, that *suttanta* will become out off at the root, without a place of refuge.” Thus we observe that in the Vedic and Early Buddhist periods all the religious and non-religious literature including the indices, was kept only in memory. That is why the Vedas were designated as *Śruti*, the learned were called *bahuśruta*, only *mukhaśthāvidyā* was held in esteem and, when writing came into use, the manuscripts were designated as *Sarasvatīmukha*. It was also probably because of the constraints of the oral nature of the preservation of knowledge that the authors of the Sūtra works devised a literary style which made the memorisation of the texts easier. Even the word *smṛiti* used for *Smṛiti* texts suggests that when their composition began they were memorised, not written down. In such a state of things one cannot help giving credence to the negative evidence of the absence of written records from the Vedic age. After all, by what sort of other evidences one may be expected to prove the non-existence of something? However, if any one is inclined to assume the existence of a script in pre-Aśokan times, he will have to admit that the onus of proving the identification of that script with the Aśokan Brāhmī is his.

Here I would like to make it clear that it is not at all necessary to presume that a class of Brāhmī knowing Indians must have existed long before Aśoka got his inscriptions engraved. After all, apart from a script, he was also using a language which

was totally foreign to the common man of a large part of his empire. The official language of the Aśokan edicts was eastern or Māgadhī Prakrit which was only slightly modified for western and north-western edicts. But the linguistic tableau of India in the age of Aśoka was extremely varied and it is certain that at least in Orissa and southern provinces of the empire the common man did not speak any Aryan tongue.<sup>12</sup> And yet we find that Aśoka has used the eastern official speech in these regions also. Apparently, therefore, the common man of these regions was not expected to read his inscriptions. In other words, speaking from the point of view of language alone, the Aśokan edicts were not meant for the common man; they were obviously meant for the persons who were being taught the language of the imperial court. In several inscriptions he states it explicitly that these records were meant for the City Magistrates (SRED, I; SREJ, I), Kumāras and Mahāmātras (SRED, II), Mahāmātras (SREJ, I) and Rājapūrushas (PE, VII). What is more, he usually expects that his officers will explain the message incorporated in the edicts to the people orally. Obviously he did not think that the common man will be able to read his inscriptions himself directly. I had, therefore, proposed that it was to this educated class of officers, monks etc. that the newly invented script was taught and conversely the edicts which were engraved by his imperial command were meant primarily for this class which was expected to explain them to the laymen. Recently, K.L. Janert has also argued that the Aśokan edicts, judging by their speech breaks, suggest that they were meant for recitation.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the absence of written records for over one thousand years before the age of Aśoka, testimony of Megasthenes is the other important plank of my suggestion. And it has also been subjected to some criticism. Now, as regards the general reliability of Megasthenes there cannot be much doubt about it. He has been used for the reconstruction of Maurya period from the beginning of the modern age. So far as the reliability of this particular fragment referring to the absence of the art of writing is concerned it definitely emanated from his *Indica*. R.C. Majumdar has divided the passages of Megasthenese which now go by the name *Indica* into four

categories in accordance with their reliability.<sup>14</sup> The passage in question, according to Majumdar, belongs to category I the authenticity of which cannot be doubted.

Some scholars have repeated the argument that the informants of Megasthenes possibly told him that the Indians decided their cases according to the *Smṛitis* using this term in the sense of 'law books' while Megasthenes took it in the literal sense of 'memory' (*mnemes*). But whatever the import of the word 'memory' in this passage, there cannot be any doubt that Megasthenes has categorically stated that at the time of his visit in c.300 B.C. Indians did not have written letters. "It has not been realized that, explanations apart, the fact remains that Megasthenes who possibly lived in India for a few years did not personally see the use of writing. As the testimony comes from the pen of a Greek who had a full knowledge of a script, it cannot be lightly brushed aside."<sup>15</sup> Here it may also be pointed out that the statement of Megasthenes regarding the absence of writing in India is about a factual situation and a common thing which the Greek ambassador could not fail to observe and could not misunderstand. Being a foreigner he could easily misunderstand, as he has apparently done, the legal status of Indian slaves but he could not fail to note the existence of writing, if there was any in the country's highest social circle in which he moved.

The testimony of Megasthenes on the absence of the art of writing in India may be explained away only on one of the following suppositions; either he has tried to mislead his readers deliberately for which no motivation is conceivable. Or he was himself misled by his Indian informants for which, again, no motivation may be imagined. Or it may be that the art of writing in India of his age "had not gained wide circulation and the circle in which Megasthenes moved did not communicate to him a clear and definite information about the regular use of writing in India".<sup>16</sup> But if the art of writing in c.300 B.C. had not gained circulation even in the imperial government and court, the circles in which Megasthenes moved, then in which society had it found circulation? Here it may be recalled that the Vedic Brāhmaṇas and Buddhist monks of the pre-Aśokan age both relied on the oral transmission of knowledge, and not on the written words.

But the art of writing is the medium of communication. It becomes relevant only if it used by at least a section of society. It cannot be maintained that this art was known to the Indian society but was kept strictly secret even from the imperial government and court and the Brāhmaṇas and monks did not use it deliberately. Therefore, we feel that if an ambassador from distant West Asia did not come across a written document in India even after a stay for some years, then, if his statement is to be accepted as it is recorded, one must also accept the conclusion, with all its implications, that no script had gained currency here by the time of Chandragupta Maurya.

Here it should also be remembered that the earliest available *Smṛiti* text is that of Manu, who composed his work probably in the second century B.C. or later. Therefore, there could have hardly existed a written set of the *Smṛiti* texts in the last decade of the fourth century B.C. Secondly, even if Megasthenes misunderstood the term *Smṛiti* and his informants actually told him about the *Smṛiti* texts it would not mean that at that time these works existed in written form. The early Buddhist and Vedic literature refer to Buddhist and Vedic 'texts' though they were written down several centuries later. The very word *Smṛiti* used for this branch of literature shows that at least when the composition of this literature commenced it was memorised and not written, just as the use of the word *śruti* for the Vedas proves that originally they were learnt by hearing from the preceptor.

Some other passages from the *Indica* of Megasthenes are regarded as relevant to our problem. They refer to pillars set up on roads to show by-roads and distances and supposedly to horoscopes, birth and death registers, forecast of weather and almanacs. But none of these passages makes an explicit mention to the use of writing. The signs and symbols used on the pillars could have been different from written letters. Megasthenes also does not specifically refer to registers, horoscopes and almanacs. It is modern scholars who deduce a reference to horoscopes, almanacs and registers from what Megasthenes has recorded. For example, forecast of weather does not necessarily entail the use of writing. Such forecasts are made even to day by illiterate villagers. Further, the authenticity of such passages is regarded as doubtful. They do not belong to the reliable categories of Majumdar.

The testimony of Nearchus, who visited North-Western India with Alexander only a couple of decades earlier than Megasthenes has also been quoted in this connection. In his *Geographicon* Strabo quotes Nearchus twice with reference to the problem under discussion. At one place (XV.1.67) he quotes Nearchus to the effect that the Indians "wrote on linen cloth that is very closely woven" and then himself adds "though other writers say that they make no use of written characters". From this it is obvious that Nearchus, who visited only the North-Western part of the country found that the Indians follow the practice of writing on linen cloth, while Strabo also knew about other 'writers' (apparently Megasthenes being one of them) who had reported that the Indians (obviously of other regions such as the Madhyadēśa) "make no use of written characters." Interestingly, the mention of such writers in plural proves that apart from Megasthenes there were others also who had made such an observation.

Anyway, the testimony of Nearchus does not prove anything so far as our suggestion is concerned. India is a vast sub-continent and, therefore, if an indigenous work or a foreign observer testifies to the prevalence of writing in a particular region in India it will not, by itself prove the existence of writing in other parts of the country. Otherwise it will be like arguing that as the Periclean Greeks had a script the other people of the contemporary Europe such as those living in what are now Spain and France, must also have been literate. This point is basic, because while the people of the North-Western part of the Indian sub-continent had been for a long time within the orbit of the influence of the Achaeminids of Iran and were, therefore, necessarily acquainted with the scripts prevalent in the Iranian empire, the same cannot be said of the people of other parts of the country.

Lastly, I would like to draw the attention of the fellow delegates to the inter-relationship of the epigraphical data and the legends found in our literary sources. As all of us know a study of Aśokan epigraphs take into consideration a student of epigraphy and history both, as many of us are, finds it difficult to fully separate the study of the data provided by these sources.

Interestingly, even in ancient times Aśokan edicts were explained by the Buddhist visitors from China in the light of Aśokan legends. In the record of his journey in India Yuan Chwang, who visited India during the reign of Harsha, several times claim to read the inscriptions or, at least, to know their contents. But the contents he attributes to these inscriptions simply do not correspond to their actual text. Indeed, in some cases where those very pillars have been discovered that the pilgrim must have seen, no correspondence between what he reports about the contents of their inscriptions and the actual reading of the inscription is found. Obviously, by his time, and even by the time of Fa-hsien also, who travelled in India from 399 to 414 A.D., Aśokan Brāhmī had long been forgotten and the message of the edicts lost. It may, therefore, be assumed that, unable to read the inscriptions himself, Yuan Chwang and Fa-hsien accepted the word of the local monks or guides as to their contents, who unable to read them either, quickly created some interpretation in order to satisfy the curiosity of the visitors. However, as Strong points out, this also cannot be the whole explanation for in one instance at least Yuan Chwang gives us exactly the same contents of a pillar edict near Pātaliputra as Fa-hsien did more than two centuries earlier.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, local guides of the site must have preserved and passed on their own traditions about the reading of these inscriptions; however wrong their assumptions about them might have been. Such being the case the fact becomes interesting and intriguing that even though they could not read the Aśokan inscriptions, nor could they get anyone to read them correctly, they told the Chinese pilgrims that their author was Aśoka, a king about whom the Buddhist visitors already knew from legends. In these circumstances it is but natural to infer that what Yuan Chwang and Fa-hsien report about the contents of these inscriptions reflect their or their local guides' knowledge of the Aśokan legends rather than the actual contents of the edicts. In other words, at least in ancient times the Aśokan edicts were explained in the light of the legends current about him and the Buddhist religion. For example, according to Yuan Chwang, Aśoka's pillar at Kusinagar merely recounted the circumstances of Buddha's death. Another pillar not far from there, recorded the division of the Buddha's

relics among the contending eight kings. A pillar at Aṭavi told how the Buddha had subdued certain demons there. An inscription at the *stūpa* of the former Buddha Krakuchchhanda related the circumstances of his death while a pillar edict near Pāṭaliputra recorded that Aśoka had thrice given Jambudvīpa as a religious offering to the Buddhist-saṃgha, and thrice redeemed it. In the Buddhist literature all these legends are found and Aśoka is portrayed as offering the whole world and his own sovereignty to the Buddhist-saṃgha several times, and on one of these occasions, at the end of his life, he is even said to have made a written inscription recording his gift and testifying to his generosity and devotion.<sup>18</sup> Thus, what the Chinese pilgrims claim to have found in the inscriptions is not what was actually recorded in them; they (or their guides) only ascribed to them the Aśokan legends which they knew about him.

This is a minor but interesting point. Though it is generally known and mentioned in the books on palaeography that in the fourteenth century Feroz Shah Tughlaq and in the sixteenth century Akbar failed to get the Brāhmī script of the pillar edicts deciphered, it is not usually mentioned that even in the c.400 A.D. Fa-hsien and in the seventh century Yuan Chwang also could not know the contents of the Aśokan epigraphs exactly, and what their informants told them about their subject-matter was far from true. In other words, knowledge of the Aśokan Brāhmī had been lost long before 400 A.D.

After the discovery of Aśokan edicts in modern times, the quest for historical Aśoka commenced and the edicts began to be accepted as the measure against which all other materials were to be tested. However, early modern scholars like Senart, Rhys Davids, B.M.Barua and many others, who were still greatly enamoured by Aśoka of the Buddhist literary traditions, continued to believe that the Aśokan legends contribute usefully to the understanding of the edicts. According to them what we find in such legends is indeed not sober history but neither it is pure fiction.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, they point out that inscriptions are also quite scanty. They give only a limited view of the set of circumstances they deal with. Therefore, it is not possible to understand them without the light thrown upon them by the later accounts. The traditional stories,

therefore, are entitled to serious consideration not only for the additional historical material by which these supplement the epigraphic data constituting the main direct source of information but also for posing various interesting problems for solution to the critical students of the Aśokan inscriptions. They also clarify certain knotty and obscure points in the inscriptions and the correct interpretation of the historical bearings of certain statements in them. Such a view has tended to colour the attitude of the historians towards Aśoka. For example, while praising the *Dhamma* and *Dhamma* policy of Aśoka, H.G.Wells opined that they earned an appreciation for Aśoka from the Buddhists 'from Volga to Japan.'<sup>20</sup> But the Buddhists 'from Volga to Japan' knew virtually nothing about the Aśoka-of-the-edicts. Instead their enthusiasm for Aśoka was based entirely on the Buddhist legends that grew up around him, that is, they admired Aśoka-of-the-legends, and not Aśoka-of-the edicts.

In view of these circumstances, many modern historians dismiss the Aśokan legends as mythical accounts. They accept only that part of the literary tradition that is supported by the edicts. But in that case the legends become virtually redundant and useless and can play the role at the most as supporting evidence. Further, such an attitude is difficult to be adopted in India where literature is a major source for historical reconstruction of the whole pre-Aśokan centuries and where even the names of the grandfather, father and most family members of Aśoka are known from legends only. An epigraphist-historian can hardly interpret various problems connected with Aśoka's relationship with the Buddhist Saṅgha as known from his edicts without taking into account the legends on this aspect of his religious activities.

Another possible attitude towards the data provided by the legends is to accept all those portions that are not supported by edicts but seem plausible enough. In other words, the supporters of this attitude plead that legends should be accepted as facts if they are human and natural and remain uncontradicted by inscriptions. This attitude assumes that legends have preserved in a large measure genuine historical traditions. Most modern historians seem to have adopted this attitude. That is why in the books on Aśoka written even by epigraphist-historians, like D.R.Bhandarkar, B.M.Barua and

R.K.Mookerji the history of his reign and activities is found reconstructed with the help of edicts and legends both, though they *mutatis mutandis* differ on the quantum of confidence they repose on legends.

In this varied spectrum of attitudes towards Aśokan legends *vis-a-vis* Aśokan edicts, an epigraphist, specially and epigraphist-historian, has no choice except relying on the inscriptional data though he cannot afford to neglect the literary traditions either when he finds them helpful. How much use he should make of the literary traditions will of course depend upon his general approach to literature as a source of history.

In the end, I once again thank the Organisers and Executive Committee of the Epigraphical Society of India for the honour done to me by calling upon me to preside over and deliver the Presidential Address to the Silver Jubilee Congress of the Society.

Friends, I am also beholden to all of you for the patience with which you have heard me.

### Notes and References

1. S.R.Goyal, in *The Origin of Brāhmī Script*, ed. by S.P.Gupta and K.S.Ramachandran, pp.1-53 (hereafter *Origin*) cf. also S.R.Goyal, *Kautilya and Megasthenes*, pp.82-100.
2. R.C.Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, pp.269-70.
3. For details see *Origin*.
4. e.g. Lallanji Gopal, T.P.Verma, S.P.Gupta, Gift Siromoney and Michael Lockwood and R.Nagaswamy *mutatis mutandis* accept that the Brāhmī was the result of invention.
5. A.M.Shastri, K.G.Krishnan, Soundara Rajan etc., disagree with our suggestions.
6. B.B. Lal, *Ancient India*, No.16, pp.4-24.
7. cf.T.P. Verma, *The Palaeography of Brāhmī Script in Northern India*, p.8.
8. D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Vol.I.
9. D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p.321.
10. For details see *Origin*, pp.23-25.
11. S.R. Goyal, *Kautilya and Megasthenes*, pp.1-20.
12. E.P. Rice, *Kanarese Literature*, p.11.
13. K.L. Janert, *German Scholars in India*, Vol.I, pp.141-45.

14. Majumdar, *op.cit.*
15. L. Gopal, *PIHC*, 1976, p.549.
16. *Ibid.*, p.550.
17. Strong, John, *The Legend of King Asoka*, p.7.
18. *Ibid.*, p.9.
19. cf.Shankar Goyal, *Recent Historiography of Ancient India*, pp.100-05.
20. H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, p.402.

# Seals of Bhāskaravarman, King of Prāggyōtisha

Ajay Mitra Shastri

## Introductory

BHĀSKARAVARMAN, also well-known as Kumāra, was the greatest historical king of Prāggyōtisha or Kāmarūpa which was coeval with modern Assam and some of the adjoining regions in the first half of the seventh century A.D. and, together with Harsha Śīlāditya of Sthāṇviśvara (modern Thānēsar, Kurukshetra district, Haryana) and Kānyakubja (modern Kannauj, Farrukhabad district, Uttara Pradesh), played the most crucial role in the then Indian politics and thereby carved a proud niche for his kingdom on the pan-Indian political map. He is the only member of the historical Bhauma-Nāraka<sup>1</sup> or Varman<sup>2</sup> line to play an important part in the politics of other portions of India and to come into close contact with China. And naturally for information about his momentous reign we have sources from outside his own kingdom in the form of the *Harsha-charita* (Biography of Harsha) by the celebrated Sanskrit poet Bāṇabhaṭṭa and the travelogue of the contemporary Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang,<sup>3</sup> his Biography by Shaman Hwui Li<sup>4</sup> as well as the *Ma-twan-lin*<sup>5</sup> and the anonymous Chinese work entitled *She-kia-fang-che*.<sup>6</sup> And barring a couple of earlier epigraphs belonging to the reigns of two earlier members of the dynasty, viz., Umāchal rock inscription of Surēndravarman<sup>7</sup> and Baḍagaṅgā inscription of Bhūtiavarman,<sup>8</sup> his are the only records giving the historical account of this dynasty from its commencement to himself. These include two copper-plate charters<sup>9</sup> and some seals<sup>10</sup> and sealings.<sup>11</sup>

## II

## Seals and Sealings

The present paper dwells upon some aspects of the last-named sources, *viz.*, seals and sealings. The only hitherto definitely known seal is that attached to his Dūbi charter. Like the plates, it is of copper and its surface is oval in shape, its diameter being 3.4" lengthwise and 3.1" breadthwise. It is divided into two parts vertically by a horizontal line drawn across the surface, the upper half being one-third and the lower one occupying the remaining two-thirds. The upper one is occupied by a majestic figure of an elephant standing frontally which is the dynastic emblem while the lower part has eleven lines of writing giving the order of succession from the beginning of Bhāskaravarman.

The excavations at Nālandā have yielded quite interesting material for the study of the Bhauma-Nāraka sigillography.<sup>12</sup> In all, three fragments of what may perhaps be described as terracotta sealings<sup>13</sup> have been reported. Of these, one is a fragment of the left lower side of the seal of Bhāskaravarman fashioned from clay and baked red. The preserved portion contains only the concluding part of last six lines giving the order of succession partially from Nārāyaṇavarman to Bhāskaravarman.<sup>14</sup> The other two are only broken parts which when joined together give us almost the complete seal. These are of baked clay turned yellowish. But a small portion on the proper right side and also at the bottom are not traceable which have resulted in the loss of several letters in all the lines. Otherwise the seal is complete.<sup>15</sup>

## Naraka, Father of Pushyavarman

The text of these seals is of enormous importance for historical purposes in as much as it affords in one most crucial case information not available anywhere else. It gives the order of succession beginning with Pushyavarman and ending with Bhāskaravarman exactly as in Bhāskaravarman's aforesaid two charters. But Pushyavarman is styled *Naraka-tanaya* and *Bhagadatta-Vajradatt-ānvaya*. While the latter expression alludes to the traditional notion that the family descended from Bhagadatta, son of Naraka and his son Vajradatta of the Mahābhārata fame, the former expression undoubtedly

purports to record the hitherto unknown fact that he was the (or a) son of an individual named Naraka. These expressions have been known to historians for over half a century, but no attempt has hitherto been made to interpret it correctly because of their obsession with the tradition that Naraka was a traditional ancestor of the family which prevented them from conceding that there could be any other person in his line who could assume this name as if it were a closely guarded monopoly of just one person and a taboo for his descendants. And this has resulted into strange interpretations of the expression in question. Hirananda Sastri, who published the text of the Nālandā seal, did not attempt any translation or interpretation. But D.C.Sircar, to whom historians are indebted for publishing the Dūbī seal, felt inconvenienced by this expression and was inclined to take the word *tanaya* in this expression in its secondary sense of a 'male descendant' in preference to its primary sense of 'son'.<sup>16</sup> The feeling of oddity involved in this interpretation is transparent enough in his remarks on it viz., 'the use of the word *tanaya* in the secondary sense of 'a male descendant' in preference to its primary sense of 'a son', especially in view of the word *anvaya* used in the adjoining expression is rather peculiar'<sup>17</sup>. Elsewhere, he renders the entire expression *Naraka-tanayō Bhagadatta-Vajradatt-ānvayō* as a 'descendant of Naraka as well as of Bhagadatta and Vajradatta'.<sup>18</sup> This was with reference to the Nālandā seals, but he refrained from referring to or making any observation on these expressions while editing the Dūbī plates<sup>19</sup> which, too, contain them. The word *tanaya* was translated as 'a grandson' by Mukund Madhava Sharma<sup>20</sup> without a word in its justification. Slightly better though much more queer was the case with D.Sharma who takes *Naraka-tanaya* as an adjective of the following expression *Bhagadatta-Vajradatt-ānvaya* and takes the two expressions together to mean 'a descendant of the lineage of Bhagadatta and Vajradatta born from Naraka'.<sup>21</sup> It would be realised that all these strange interpretations have been forced by the problem of accommodating it with the tradition that makes Naraka the first male ancestor of the dynastic line.

However, the fact that Naraka was the name of the progenitor of the dynasty could (and should) not have deterred his descendants from adopting this name, and in fact we have

several instances in other lineages of some of the members bearing the identical names including those of the founders. It was actually a common practice to christen children after their famed ancestors. It would have really been rather strange if Naraka's name was not given to any of his descendants.<sup>22</sup> We are therefore inclined to hold that the word *tanaya* in the instant case is employed in its primary connotation of 'son' and one need not go in search of its forced interpretations as suggested by the aforesaid scholars. There was, thus, a personage called Naraka in the family towards the close of the third or early fourth century A.D, and he was the father of the first documented monarch, viz., Pushyavarman, of this line. But his non-mention in the eulogy in the two aforesaid records of Bhāskaravarman as well as the manner in which he is mentioned in the seal inscriptions under reference<sup>23</sup> should leave no doubt that he was not so very powerful and had not much of pretension of ruling power. It is not impossible that he might have been the last of the chiefs who are said in the Dūbī plates to have ruled for three thousand years following Vajradatta.<sup>24</sup>

The complete expression has been either as *śrīman=Naraka-tanayō Bhagadatta-Vajradatt-ānvayō* or *śrīmān=Naraka-tanayō Bhagadatta-Vajradatt-ānvayō*. The slight but highly significant difference lies in the medial sign in the second letter being *a* or *ā* (*ma* or *mā*). The reading in the Nālandā seals is undoubtedly *śrīman*,<sup>25</sup> but D.C.Sircar, and following him, others have read the same word as *śrīmān* in the seal attached to the Dūbī charter.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, however, the word including the medial sign for *ā*, and for that matter, much of the succeeding portion is not at all clear in the illustration accompanying Sircar's paper<sup>27</sup> or anywhere else,<sup>28</sup> making it difficult to ascertain the exact position in this regard. In case the intended reading is the former (viz., *śrīman*), it would apply to the immediately following name, viz., Naraka, who would then have been referred to as 'illustrious' or (literally) 'endowed with prosperity'. And if the latter (*śrīmān*) be the correct reading, it would apply to his son Pushyavarman, and his father (Naraka) would be left without any title or honorific. Moreover, Pushyavarman is also styled *Mahārādhirāja* and *śrī-Prāgyōtish-ēndra* ('the illustrious lord

of Prāggyōtisha') and the employment of an additional *śrīmat* for him would be simply an uncalled for repetition.<sup>29</sup> We are therefore, of the opinion that the intended reading of the word in question is *śrīman*, and even if the word is spelt as *śrīmān* (with the length of the medial over *m*) in the Dūbī seal it has to be treated as an error which is not uncommon in ancient inscriptions. This would be certainly much more appropriate as it would eliminate an unnecessary reiteration and also furnish an expected honorific. It is most unlikely that the first monarch's father was intended to be mentioned without any title. However, there is no doubt whatsoever that Naraka, the father of the first recorded monarch of the line, Pushyavarman, was a rather insignificant personage and he is, in fact, the only member of the dynasty referred to without any regal title while all others are either styled or intended to be styled *Mahārājādhirāja*.

Before we proceed further, it would be convenient to give the genealogy and order of succession of Varmans according to the seal-inscriptions. And as the accounts met with in the Dūbī and Nālandā seal-records differ slightly, it would be better to outline them separately.

### According to The Dūbī Seal

King (Naraka)	Chief Queen
Pushyavarman	
Samudravarmān	Dattadēvī
Balavarman	Ratnavatī
Kalyāṇavarman	Gandharvavatī
Gaṇapativarman	Yajñavatī
Mahendra	Suvratā
Nārāyaṇavarman	Dēvamati
Bhūtivarmman	Vijñānavatī

Chandramukhavarman	Bhōgavatī
Sthiravarman	Nayanā
Susthitavarman	Dhruvalakshmi
Bhāskaravarman	

### According to the Nālandā Seals

King (Naraka)	Chief Queen
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Pushyavarman	
Samudravarmān	Dattavatī
Balavarman	Ratnavatī
Kalyāṇavarman	Gandharvvavatī
Gaṇapativarman	Yajñavatī
Mahēndravarmān	Suvratā
Nārāyanavarman	Dēvamati
Bhūti-varman	Vijñānavatī
Chandramukhavarman	Bhōgavatī
Sthiravarman	Nayanaśōbhā
Susthiravarman	Dhruvalakshmi <sup>30</sup> or Śyāmalakshmi <sup>31</sup>
Supratishṭitavarman	Bhāskaravarman

### Comparison between the Names in the Seals

It will be noticed that though the seals belong to the same monarch, there are to be noticed some differences in the way some of the names are spelt. Thus, the name of the queen of Samudravarmān is spelt as Dattadevi in the first seal and Dattavatī in the second. The name of the son of Gaṇapativarman is given in an abbreviated form as

Mahēndra in the Dūbī and Mahēndravarmaṇ in the Nālandā seal. Likewise, we have Nayanā as the name of Sthiravarman's queen in the Dūbī and its full form Nayanāśōbhā in the other seal. The name of the next king is spelt differently in the two seals, viz., Susthitavarman in the first and Susthiravarman in the second. And lastly, if we were to concede the reading of K.N.Dikshit, the Nālandā seal would give the name of the last-mentioned king's spouse as Śyāmalakshmī while the Dūbī seal spells it as Dhruvalakshmī. However, as the concerned portion in the Nālandā seal is irretrievably damaged, the reading is purely a matter of conjecture and preference, and Hirananda Sastri himself prefers the form Dhruvalakshmī as in the Dūbī seal though in a footnote he also concedes the possibility of the reading being Śyāmādēvī.<sup>32</sup> Then, it seems the composer of the draft of the Dūbī seal was pressed for space or loved shortening of names as would follow from the abbreviated forms Mahēndra and Nayanā. And last but not most significant difference, perhaps reflective of attitudes, is the omission of Supratishṭitavarman in the Dūbī seal and his mention in the Nālandā seal. Obviously, the officer responsible for drafting the text of the Dūbī seal preferred referring to the lineal succession and as Supratishṭitavarman was not in the direct line and was only a collateral in so far as his younger brother and successor Bhāskaravarman was concerned, he omitted him.<sup>33</sup> It is pertinent to note in this context that both the Dūbī and Nidhānpur plates refer to Supratishṭitavarman reverentially and make it clear that Supratishṭitavarman's memory was cherished by the royal court during the reign of Bhāskaravarman. However, there was no bar on mentioning a collateral, especially if he happened to be the immediate and, at that, beloved predecessor on the throne and respected too, as we find Harsha's elder brother and immediate predecessor Rājyavardhana mentioned in the former's seals.<sup>34</sup> The inescapable conclusion, therefore, is that the draft of the two seals was composed by two different persons.

### Differences of Names as found in Seal-texts and Other Sources

Then, there are some other sources which give different

spellings of names as compared to one or both the seals. Thus, the Dūbī plates give the name of Samudravarman's queen as Dattavatī as against Dattadēvī met with in the Nidhānpur plates and, what looks strange, in the text of the seal affixed to the Dūbī charter, that of Balavarman's queen is given as Ratnadēvī in the Dūbī plates as opposed to Ratnavatī elsewhere including the Dūbī seal; the queen of Nārāyaṇavarman is called Dēvavatī in the Dūbī and Nidhānpur charters as against Dēvamati in the seal-texts; the form Bhūtivarman is vouched for by his own Baḍagaṅgā rock inscription, Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harsha-charita* and the two seals, whereas the Dūbī and Nidhānpur plates prefix the word *mahat* to it, viz., call him Mahābhūtivarman,<sup>35</sup> Sthiravarman of the seals is called Sthitivarman by Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Sthitavarman in the remaining sources, whereas his son's name is spelt as Susthiravarman by Bāṇa as in the Nālandā seals; and that of Susthitavarman's queen is spelt as Dhruvalakshmi in the Dūbī charter as in the seal attached to it, and as Śyāmādēvī in the Nidhānpur charter. Apparently all these spellings were current concurrently.

Though the Varman kings are styled in the two seals as *Mahārājādhirāja* only from Pushyavarman upto Kalyāṇavarman, there is no doubt that all the monarchs were intended to be so mentioned; otherwise one will have to believe, ridiculously enough, that even Bhāskaravarman, to whom the seals belong and who played a vital role in Indian polity during the first half of the seventh century A.D, did not assume this title and was not a sovereign ruler. Moreover, this supposition is buttressed by the fact that Bhūtivarman so styled himself in his own Baḍagaṅgā inscription. And so did the collateral or rebel Surēndravarman in the Umāchal rock inscription as will be seen in the sequel.

### Mahēndravarman, the Real Founder of the Family's Greatness

Although not styled *Mārājādhirāja* in the two seal inscriptions, there is no doubt that Mahēndravarman who flourished about mid-fifth century A.D, was the first really powerful member of the dynasty and the founder of its greatness as would follow from the fact that he is credited with the observance of not one, but two, horse-sacrifices. None of his predecessors, who are all given the sovereign

style of *Mahājādhirāja*, is as of now known to have achieved this feat of enormous religio-political significance.

### Surēndravarman not identical with Mahēndravarman

A short inscription on the Nīlāchal (north-eastern portion of the Kāmākhyā hill) or Umāchal rock dating from sometime close to the Baḍagaṅgā inscription of Bhūtiavarman, grandson of Mahēndravarman, has brought to light a monarch named Surēndravarman who is styled *Mahārājādhirāja* and apparently ruled the Guwahātī region.<sup>36</sup> As this region is known to have formed the backbone of the Varman kingdom, he was undoubtedly a member of this dynasty unless we were to treat him as an outside intruder. And the editors of this record, D.C.Sircar and P.D.Choudhury, 'tentatively' equated this Surēndravarman with Mahēndravarman on the grounds that no ruler of this name is mentioned in either the seal inscriptions or the two charters of Bhāskaravarman and that Sanskrit writers were too fond of employing synonymous names.<sup>37</sup> This equation is, however, open to serious objections. The liberty of using synonymous words in the personal names was taken by writers of versified texts due to metrical exigencies. And if the authors of the two metrical charters of Bhāskaravarman had employed such equivalent words, it could be intelligible; but they did not. Moreover prosodically both the words have an identical number of components metrically and as such there was no necessity whatsoever of employing these words as interchangeable. We are consequently inclined to take both these rulers as distinct from each other and to regard Surēndravarman as a collateral or a rebel which dissuaded or prevented the composers of these records from mentioning him. Such collaterals or rebels are not mentioned in any dynasty's official records and are known only from other sources.

### Horse-Sacrifices observed by the Prāgjyōtisha Kings

Though not styled *Mahārājādhirāja* in the seals like his predecessors, Mahēndravarman was undoubtedly the first great ruler of the line as shown by the fact, known only from them, that he observed two horse sacrifices<sup>38</sup> which must symbolise some significant accretion to his power and authority. Another member of the dynasty to achieve the same feat was one of his descendants Sthiravarman<sup>39</sup> who was removed from him

by three generations. This is also known from these records only. Another king who performed an *Aśvamēdha* sacrifice was Bhūtivarman; but it is not recorded in the seal-inscriptions and is known only from his own Baḍagaṅgā (Nowgong district, Assam) rock inscription.<sup>40</sup>

While most of the historians have agreed that Mahēndravarmā is intended to be described as the observer of two horse sacrifices, some scholars doubt the applicability of the concerned expression to him and feel that in reality it refers to his son and successor Nārāyaṇavarman and that the composers of the seal-texts actually desired to credit these politically significant rituals to the latter. D.C.Sircar, who is the proponent of this theory, feels that when compared to the description of Sthiravarman's twin *Aśvamēdhas* later described in these very texts, it leads one to the conclusion that the earlier allusion is applicable to Nārāyaṇavarman, and not to his father Mahēndravarmā. As it is of great value for the history of the Varman dynasty, we may discuss the question at some length. While the Baḍagaṅgā inscription contains an explicit reference to the performance of an *Aśvamēdha* by Bhūtivarman and there is no contemporary evidence for the staging of this sacrifice by Mahēndravarmā and the seal-inscriptions would, following the commonly accepted interpretation, appear to be reticent about the *Aśvamēdha* of Bhūtivarman, Sircar is inclined to hold that the reference in question in the seals is actually to Nārāyaṇavarman whose name follows it. And he feels further that it is likely that the second of the two *Aśvamēdhas* credited to Nārāyaṇavarman was celebrated when that king was too old and his son Bhūtivarman was ruling the kingdom on behalf of his father and that this was the reason why Bhūtivarman in his own inscription said to have observed an *Aśvamēdha*.<sup>41</sup> He argues that even as the expression *divi=aśvamēdhayājī* referring to the horse-sacrifices performed by Sthiravarman precedes his name,<sup>42</sup> so also the earlier phrase referring to the similar feat ought to be taken to refer to king Nārāyaṇavarman whose name follows it.<sup>43</sup> These statements are undoubtedly true and there must be the same rules applicable in both the cases. But a fundamental difference is made by the nature of the two references. In the former case the expression *divi=aśvamēdhayājī* precedes

the king's name immediately, while in the latter instance the two (*dvis=turagamēdh-āhartā* and *Śrī-Nārāyaṇavarmanā*) are separated from one another by the reference to the name of the chief queen of Mahēndravarman and mother of Nārāyaṇavarman, *Suvratā*, mentioned in the locative singular (*śrī-Suvratāyām*) which makes a world of difference in our understanding. There is no doubt that according to Sanskrit syntax any word or name can occupy any place in a sentence. But this laxity was permissible in a versified composition to meet the metrical exigencies which is, however, not the case with the seal-texts which are drafted entirely in prose. The description of Mahēndravarman in the *Dūbī*<sup>44</sup> and *Nidhānpur*<sup>45</sup> plates also lends some support to the fact that he had actually observed some sacrifices. While the former speaks of his observing a 'number of sacrifices like the great Indra', the latter refers to him as 'the support for sacrificial rites like the fire, the very foundation for sacrificial rites, in the manner of the friction-wood (*araṇi*), which is also the source of sacrifices'.<sup>46</sup> In the ordinary course these references might have been dismissed as merely conventional, but they assume historical value when we find him represented as performing two *Aśvamēdhas* in the seal-inscriptions in question. The comparison of his sacrifices with those of god Indra is especially noteworthy as the god is believed to have reached his position by observing as many as full one hundred *Aśvamēdhas* in consequence of which he is called *Śatakratu* ('performer of one hundred (horse) sacrifices'). That Bhūtiavarman too performed at least one horse-sacrifice is evident from his assumption of the style *aśvamēdha-yājīn* in his aforesaid inscription, but what need not come in the way of his grandfather Mahēndravarman observing the same sacrifices. The omission of reference to his *Aśvamēdha* or *Aśvamēdhas*, if he performed more than one such sacrifice, can be dismissed as due to the carelessness on the part of the composers of the seal-inscriptions which was also responsible for the omission of the regal style *Mahārājādhirāja* for numerous kings beginning with Mahēndravarman.

The seals/sealings are of great value otherwise also. They and the two charters of the reign of Bhāskaravarman who lived in the seventh century A.D., record the history of the line for as many as thirteen generations beginning about the

commencement of the fourth century A.D., viz., for almost three and a half centuries. It indicates that records of dynasties and important events were assiduously preserved in Prāgyōtisha during the early centuries A.D. And if the name of the chief queen of the first king Pushyavarman is omitted, it is perhaps indicative of the fact that he was not very powerful and no record of his reign except only his name, like that of his father Naraka, was preserved. Apparently the tradition started somewhat later when the family became powerful. This is in line with the Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang's statement that archives were maintained in India.

### Notes and References

1. The dynasty is called Bhauma because it traced its origin from the earth goddess through contact with god Vishṇu in his boar incarnation. It is apparently owing to this tradition that the Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang speaks of his contemporary Kumāra Bhāskaravarman as a descendant of Nārāyaṇadēvā (Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, II, London, 1905, p.186). It was known as Nāraka as its human progenitor was their (earth's and Vishṇu's) son Naraka.
2. The nomenclature 'Varman' is based on the name-ending 'varman' assumed by all its members.
3. Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, I, London, 1905, p.384; II, pp.185-87.
4. *The Life of Hiuen-Tsang*, pp.165 ff. There are references to him scattered at several places in the work following these pages.
5. M.Paurgier, "Thien-Chu-India: Extract from *Ma-twan-lin*, Book CCCXXXVIII, Fol.14", translated from the French of M.Stanislas Julien, *IA.*, 1880, pp.19-20.
6. Edited by P.C.Bagchi, *Viśva Bharati*, 1959.
7. D.C.Sircar and P.D.Choudhury, "Umāchal Rock Inscription of Surēndravarmā", *EI.*, Vol.XXXI, 1955-56, pp.67-69.
8. D.C.Sircar, "Note on the Baḍagaigā Inscription of Bhūtivarman", *ibid.*, Vol.XXX, 1953-54, pp.62-67.
9. These are his Dūbī (D.C.Sircar, "Dūbī Plates of Bhūtivarman", *ibid.*, XXX, 1953-54, pp.287-304; M.M.Sharma, *Inscriptions of Ancient Assam (IAA)*, Guwahati, 1978, pp.10-32;

- D.Sharma, *Kāmarūpa-sāsanāvalī* (KS), Guwahati, 1981, pp.18, 152-60 and Nidhānpur, Padmanatha Bhattacharya, "Nidhānpur Copper-Plates of Bhāskaravarman", *EI*, Vol.XII, 1913-14, pp. 65-79; "Two Lost Plates of Nidhānpur Copper-plates of Bhāskaravarman", *ibid.*, Vol.XIX, 1927-28, pp.115-27; "A Third Lost Plate of the Nidhānpur Plates of Bhāskaravarman", *ibid.*, pp.245-50; *IAA.*, pp.38-81; *KS*, pp.33-35; 161-66 copper-plate charters.
10. The seal attached to his aforesaid Dūbī plates (*EI*, Vol.XXX, Pl.facing p.305) appears to be his only extant seal. The seal of the Nidhānpur charter, which must have been almost identical, has, however, not been found yet.
  11. Though described as seals by Hirananda Sastri (*Nālandā and its Epigraphical Material (NEM)*, *MASI*, No.66, 1942, pp.69-70), they, like most others which are similarly labelled, appear to have actually been sealings. See also R.D.Banerji, "A Seal of Kumāra Bhāskaravarman of Prāgjyotisha found at Nālandā" *JBORS*, Vol.V, 1919, pp.302-04; K.N.Dikshit, "The Nālandā Seal of Kumāra Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa", *ibid.*, Vol.VI, 19-20, pp.151-52.
  12. *Ibid.*, pp.69-70.
  13. They may actually be impressions of seals on baked clay (terracotta). There is no mention or illustration of the writing in the negative as one would expect if they were seals. What we have are only the positive devices and legends that befit their impressions.
  14. *Ibid.*, p.69, No.S.I., 362.
  15. *Ibid.*, pp.69-70, Nos.S.I., 687 and S.I., 691, Pl, IX, a-b. The whole account appears to be confusing.
  16. 'Āśvamēdhas celebrated by Kāmarūpa Kings', *IHQ.*, Vol.XXI, 1945, p.144.
  17. *Ibid.*
  18. "Note on Baḍagaṅgā Inscription of Bhūti-varman", *EI*, Vol.XXX, 1953-54, pp.287-304.
  19. "Dūbī plates of Bhāskaravarman", *ibid.*, pp.287-304.
  20. *IAA.*, p.35.
  21. *KS.*, Part III, p.160.
  22. D.Sharma also postulates the existence of more than one (actually three) Narakas but all of them flourished, according to him, considerably prior to Pushyavarman.

23. He is referred to without any regal title and his name is just preceded by the common honorific *śrīmat*.
24. Vide KS., Part II, p.21, verse 7:
25. *Varṁśyēshu tasya nṛpatishu varsha-sahasra-trayaṁ padam = avāya/  
Yātēshu dēvabhūyaṁ kshitiśvaraḥ Pushyavarm-ābhūt//*
26. See Hirananda Sastri, *op.cit.*, Pl.IX(a - b), line 1. The reading *śrīmān* given by M.M.Sharma (IAA., p.35) is undoubtedly due to inadvertence.
27. "The Dūbī Plates of Bhāsekaravarman", *EI.*, Vol.XXX, 1953-54, p.288 line 1.
28. *Ibid.*, plate facing p.305.
29. IAA., pl.XI.
30. It may perhaps be argued that the honorific *śrī* is intended to be applied for the following *Prāgjyōtish-ēndra*, for the names of the countries were also sometimes referred to with the honorific. But in that case the first king Pushyavarman will be left without the honorific *śrī* which is applied to all the kings' and queens' names that follow.
31. The portion of the seal giving the name is almost completely damaged. Hirananda Sastri, however, prefers this reading.
32. This is the reading preferred by K.N.Dikshit.
33. *NEM.*, p.70, line 8 and fn.4.
34. This underscores the point that it was not always necessary to mention an immediate royal predecessor even if he was elder brother of the reigning monarch and the relations between the two were quite cordial. Historians are therefore not justified in basing their strange-looking theories on such non-mentions as some have done in the case of the Gupta emperor Skanda Gupta.
35. For his Nālandā seal, see *NEM.*, pp.68-69.
36. The practice of prefixing *mahat* ('great') is met with among the Śarabhapuriyas, Pāṇḍuvamśins and Sōmavamśins of South Kōsala and Orissa where most of the members of the dynasties had coronation names beginning with this word, in some cases in addition to their personal names also encountered in their records. See for the naming practices among them, Ajay Mitra Shastri, *Early History of the Deccan: Problems and Perspectives (EHDPP)*. Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1987, pp.258-67.

37. D.C.Sircar and P.D.Choudhury, "Umāchal Rock Inscription of Surēndravarmā", *EL.*, Vol.XXXI, 1955-56. pp.67-79.
38. *Ibid.*, p.68.
39. *Śrī-Mahēndrō* (or *śrī-Mahēndravarmā*) *dnis=turagamēdh-āharttā* is the relevant expression.
40. *Dvir=aśvamēdhayājī Sthiravarmā* is the wording in the seals.
41. D.C.Sircar, "Note on the Baḍagaṅgā Inscription of Bhūti-varman", *EL.*, Vol.XXX, 1953-54, p.67.
42. "Aśvamēdhas Performed by the Kings of Kāmarūpa". *IHQ.*, Vol.XXI, 1945, pp.144-45.
43. See *supra* note 39 for the passage.
44. See *supra* note 38 for the original passage.
45. M.M.Sharma, *IAA.*, p.24, verse 24.
46. *Ibid.*, p.41, verse 12.
47. Both these English renderings are cited from *ibid.*, pp.22 and 51.

# An Inscription from Pānīpat

M. Ilyas Quddusi

THIS PERSIAN record<sup>1</sup> in *Nast'aliq* characters is fixed over the railing near the tomb of Muqarrab Khān adjacent to the countrywide famous tomb of Sharafu'd Dīn Bū 'Alī Qalandar (d.1324) at Pānīpat, now a district headquarters in Haryānā. There are in all seven graves (west to east) without bearing any inscriptions in the tomb inside a railing belonging to the family of Muqarrab Khān, No.2 being the grave of Muqarrab Khān.

The three-line Persian text reads as under:

1. Maqbara-i-
2. Wazīr-i-Jahāngīr Nawwāb Muqarrab Khān Kairānawī
3. Sana 1053 Hijrī.

## Translation

1. Burial-place of
2. Minister of Jahāngīr Nawwāb Muqarrab Khān Kairānawī (i.e. Kairāna).
3. The year (of construction is), 1053 Hijrī (1643-44 A.D.).

The findspot of the epigraph, Pānīpat (29° 24' N & 76° 59' E) to the north of Delhi, has been the town of great antiquity that finds mention in the *Mahābhārata*, being one of the five places demanded by Yudhishtira from Duryōdhana as the price for peace. In the medieval times, Pānīpat enjoyed greater importance. About two dozen Perso-Arabic inscriptions including Urdū inscriptions have been copied from this place, representing the Mamlūks, Khaljīs, Tughluqs, Lodīs and the Mughals, and these are dated between 1246 and 1867.<sup>2</sup> But its chief title to fame lies in the fact that it has been the scene of three most decisive battles of northern India resulting in the rout of Ibrāhīm Lodī at the hands of Bābur in the first battle of Pānīpat in 1526, the defeat of Himū at the hands of emperor Akbar in the second battle of Pānīpat in 1556 and Ahmad Shāh Abdālī's splendid victory over the Marāṭhās in

the third battle of Pānīpat in 1761.<sup>3</sup> Under the Mughals, it was a *pargana* headquarters in the *Sarkār* and *Sūbah*, i.e. district and province of Delhi.<sup>4</sup> In the 23rd regnal year (1650), Shāh Jahān conferred the *pargana* of Pānīpat with an annual revenue of one crore *dāms* (Rs.2,50,000), as a free gift on Princess Jahān Arā Begam (d.1680).<sup>5</sup>

Pānīpat has also been famous because of the holy shrine of Sharafu'd Dīn Bū 'Alī Qalandar (1208-1324) where Muqarrab Khān of our inscription under study was the custodian and trustee. Muqarrab Khān seems to have been spiritually much attached to the holy shrine where he was instrumental in getting his own tomb constructed in his life time in A.H.1053 (1643-44). He died three years later in A.H.1056 (1646) at the hoary age of over ninety or over hundred years.<sup>6</sup> The career of Muqarrab Khān under emperor Jahāngīr (1605-27) has been of great importance, hence I would like to delve deep into his biography for the benefit and interest of the scholars.

Muqarrab Khān's original name was Shaikh Hasan but he was more popular with the nickname Hassū. His father's name was Shaikh Bīnā (Shaikh Bhaniyā<sup>7</sup> or Phaniyā also) who was the son of Shaikh Hasan of Pānīpat.

Shaikh Bīnā's ancestors had been well-practised in the field of surgery. He himself was in the imperial service under Akbar (1556-1605), working as a physician and surgeon. He was also a specialist in the eye-diseases. He was very skilful in treating elephants and earned great popularity in this regard. His son Shaikh Hasan, later called Muqarrab Khān, was equally well-versed in this field, taking part along with his father in the treatments.<sup>8</sup> The physicians of the time both in India and abroad deemed him as Galen and Messaiah of the age. He treated all diseases, major and minor, and would wash wounds personally without any smack of disgust and supply medicine from his own dispensary. He experimented with the prescriptions contained in the work *Ma'dīnu'sh Shifā-i-Sikandarī* also called *Tibb-i-Sikandar Shāhī* (completed in 1502 or 1512) of Miyān Bhowa (d.1519),<sup>9</sup> the prime minister under Sikandar Lodī (1488-1517) and prepared an abridgement of that work under the title '*Ain'sh-Shifā*'.<sup>10</sup>

Regarding the medical and surgical proficiency of Shaikh Bīnā and his son Shaikh Hasan, an incident is worth recording

here. In the 41st regnal year (1596-97) of Akbar, a buck, in the course of a deer-fight, ran amok towards the Emperor and inflicted a serious wound with its horns on his testicles. On account of the diversity of opinion among the physicians in the court, there was delay in the imperial treatment and the pain momentarily increased and ultimately, the case was left to reputed physicians like Hakīm Misrī and Hakīm 'Alī. On this occasion, it was Shaikh Bīnā and his son Shaikh Hasan who performed laudable services in putting on the plasters and in opening and tying the imperial bandages. Since the eleventh day there was signs of improvement, but the emperor passed twenty-nine days with difficulty and his injury took him to fully recover in all one month and twenty-two days.<sup>11</sup>

As Shaikh Bīnā was a physician to Akbar, so was his son Shaikh Hasan to Prince Salīm i.e. Jahāngīr. Shaikh Hasan from his early years was brought up in the service of Jahāngīr and performed excellent services. Jahāngīr spoke highly of him, adding the remark 'few kings possessed a servant like Shaikh Hasan'. When Jahāngīr became emperor, the first and foremost person who got an office was Shaikh Hasan.<sup>12</sup> When Jahāngīr was a prince, Shaikh Hasan had been distinguished by the title of Muqarrab Khān.<sup>13</sup>

Muqarrab Khān played very active role in other fields also. He would often accompany the emperor and traverse long distances with him at the time of royal hunting. He was skilful and adept in using both the arrow and the gun. Soon after his accession, Jahāngīr deputed him to Burhānpūr, the provincial headquarters of Mughal Khāndesh, in order to bring the children and dependants of late Prince Dāniyāl (d.1604) and also carry the admonitory imperial message to 'Abdūr Rahīm Khān-i-Khānān (d.1627). He performed this service briskly and after six months and twenty-two days returned to Lāhore and presented before the emperor the effects and three sons, viz., Tahmūras, Baysunghar and Hūshang and four daughters of late Prince Dāniyāl.<sup>14</sup>

Muqarrab Khān held various assignments during his career under Jahāngīr. Since he was a connoisseur of jewellery, the emperor assigned him the important province of Gujarāt which had ports like Sūrat and Cambay, each of which was a mine of rarities. Being posted in Gujarāt, he had been sending precious

and rare items like jewels, vessels of gold and silver, jewelled objects, pearls, decorated vessels, cloths and other beautiful and choicest presents.<sup>15</sup>

Despite his intimacy with Jahāngīr, once Muqarrab Khān faced imperial wrath and rage also. During his posting in Gujarāt as the governor, in the 5th regnal year (1610-11), a widow woman complained to the emperor that Muqarrab Khān had taken her daughter by force in the port of Cambay. Following the inquiry, it was discovered that one of Muqarrab Khān's attendants had been guilty of this outrage. He was done to death by way of punishment and the rank of Muqarrab Khān was also reduced by one half.<sup>16</sup>

In the 7th regnal year (1612-13), Jahāngīr deputed Muqarrab Khān to the port of Goa in order to buy for the private use of the government, certain rarities. He went to Goa and brought to the court rarities including some strange and wonderful animals, never seen before.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, the Europeans of Goa plundered four cargo-vessels near the port of Sūrat, making a large number of Muslims, prisoners. At this disturbing news, Jahāngīr despatched Muqarrab Khān who was in charge of Sūrat to look into the matter and demanded compensation for the loss caused by the Europeans.<sup>18</sup>

In 1612-13, Muqarrab Khān held the rank of 2,000 and 1,000 horses, which was first raised to 2,500 and 1,500 horses and thereafter to 3,000 and 2,000 horses and the province of Delhi was left under his charge.<sup>19</sup> During the period of 1613-16, when he was the governor of Sūrat and Cambay<sup>20</sup>, his rank in the 10th regnal year (1615-16) being raised to 5,000 and 2,500 horses<sup>21</sup> and further elevated in the 11th regnal year (1616-17) to 5,000 and 5,000 horses, which he held till the last.<sup>22</sup> As he keenly desired and requested, he was appointed governor of Gujarāt again in 1617.

In those days, any damage to horticulture was not tolerated. Once a servant of Muqarrab Khān had to pay a heavy penalty for having cut down some *champa* trees elsewhere alongside the river. At the complaint of a gardener in this regard, the emperor personally enquired into the matter and ordered that both of his thumbs should be cut off as a warning to others, as Muqarrab Khān knew nothing of this improper act of his own servant.<sup>23</sup>

Later on Muqarrab Khān was recalled and the province of Gujarāt was given in fief to Prince Khurrām (Shāh Jahān)<sup>24</sup> who appointed his favourite Dhulfaqār Khān as governor of Sūrat.

In the 13th regnal year (1618-19), Muqarrab Khān was appointed governor of Bihār<sup>25</sup> and three years later in the 16th regnal year (1621-22), that province was transferred to Sultān Parvīz.<sup>26</sup> He returned to the court and was made governor of the province of Āgra in the 17th regnal year (1622-23) where he continued till the following year.<sup>27</sup> Afterwards, he occupied the post of 2nd *Bakhshī* (pay-master) and became more intimate with Jahāngīr.<sup>28</sup>

In the beginning of Shāh Jahān's reign (1628-58), Muqarrab Khān, on account of old age, was excused imperial service and allowed to retire to the town of Kairāna which was his native place and had been his fief also.<sup>29</sup> After retirement, he spent his days in perfect pleasure in company of 1,000 beautiful women friends who were also in-charge of his workshops. These ladies expressed the view that there had been no other wealthy person like him who had so much virility and who could devote so much time to carnal enjoyment.<sup>30</sup>

As Muqarrab Khān was the trustee of the shrine of Hadrat Shaikh Bū 'Alī Qalandar,<sup>31</sup> he out of devotion and spiritual attachment, built his own tomb at Pānīpat in A.H.1053 (1643-44), as evidenced by the epigraph under study. Some contemporary and later Persian sources like *Dhakhīrat-ūl-Khawānīn* by Shaikh Farīd Bhakkārī and *Māāthir-ūl-Umarā* by Shāh Nawāz Khān respectively, refer to the construction of the tomb but do not specify the date of its construction. He survived over ninety or hundred years and expired at his native place Kairāna in the 19th regnal year of Shāh Jahān in A.H.1056 (1646). Needless to say that after his demise, his corpse was brought to Pānīpat for burial in the holy shrine-complex of Bū'Alī Qalandar Pānīpatī.

Being associated with Kairāna deeply as a fief-holder and holding a high rank under Jahāngīr, Muqarrab Khān carried out a lot of building activities there. Presently, it is the tahsīl place in the Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh.<sup>32</sup> Under the Mughals, Kairāna (29° 24' N. & 77° 12' E) was a *pargana* headquarters in the *sarkār* of Sahāranpūr in the *Sūbah* of Delhi,<sup>33</sup> bearing pleasant climate and fertile soil.

Under the Sūrs and the Mughals, Kairāna had been a place of great importance as gleaned from the inscriptions copied from there.<sup>34</sup> Particularly under Jahāngīr, the place assumed greater importance because of the imperial intimacy with his minister Muqarrab Khān. There have been occasions in the 14th and 15th regnal years (1619-21) when the emperor at the request of Muqarrab Khān visited the place in the company of imperial ladies, speaking highly of the beautiful garden termed *Bāgh-i-Jannatābād* raised by Muqarrab Khān.<sup>35</sup> When the imperial court encamped there, the *vakīls* (agents) of Muqarrab Khān offered sumptuous presents.<sup>36</sup>

In Kairāna, Muqarrab Khān erected magnificent buildings and raised a pucca wall round the garden mentioned above, 140 *bighās* in extent. There was in it a tank measuring 220 cubits long by 200 broad, still to be seen to the north-east of the town. In the middle of the tank was a *māhtāb* terrace for use in moonlight, 22 yards square. The *bāradarī* (pavilion) in his garden is now in a dilapidated condition. He planted both hot and cold-weather trees and it is said that pistachio trees also flourished there. He had the plantation of saffron also. Whenever he heard of good mango-trees, whether in Gujarāt or in the Deccan or elsewhere, he brought the seed and planted in his garden. Hence the mangoes of Kairāna were much celebrated in Delhi, above all others. He obtained excellent fruit-trees and flower-plants from all parts of India, Europe, Irān and 'Irāq.<sup>37</sup> Mangoes were not available in northern India after the months of June and July, but Muqarrab Khān had established gardens in the Kairāna *pargana* and looked after the mangoes there in such a way as to prolong the season for more than two months and send them every day fresh into the special fruit store-house. As this was altogether an unusual thing being accomplished, it was recorded by Jahāngīr in his valuable *Tūzuk*. The horticultural interest of Muqarrab Khān was of dynamic nature.

It would not be improper to mention about the persons who had been associated with Muqarrab Khān or with his family. A follower of his, whose name is not specified, founded Shāmī which was carved out of the old *pargana* of Kairāna, during the reign of Jahāngīr. The property remained in his family until the reign of Bahādur Shāh (1707-12).<sup>38</sup>

Muqarrab Khān had a few sons, one of whom was Miyān Ilāh Bakhsh who passed away in the prime of his life. Another son was Rizqullāh who held the rank of 800 under Shāh Jahān. He too was a skilful physician and surgeon of his time. Aurangzeb (1658-1707) granted him the title of Khān and further raised his rank. It was Rizqullāh Khān who constructed a portico adjacent to the tomb of Sharafūd Dīn Bū 'Alī Qalandar in 1661. He passed away in the 10th regnal year (1667-68) of Aurangzeb.<sup>39</sup> Among other sons of Muqarrab Khān whose names are not specified, did not have any rank or official status. Muqarrab Khān bequeathed his knowledge to his successor son-in-law Shaikh Qāsim, but unfortunately the latter was not destined to survive the former.

Muqarrab Khān had an adopted son also whose real name was Sādullāh and as a poet he was known as Masīhā-i-Kairānawī Pānīpatī. He is credited with having composed an abbreviated versified translation of the Rāmāyaṇa, called *Hadīth-i-Rām-u-Sītā*, dedicated to emperor Jahāngīr. Its manuscripts are available in various research-centres and libraries at Lāhore, Bānkīpūr (Patna), Bombay, Hyderābād, Calcutta, London, etc.<sup>40</sup> Shāh Nawāz Khān, the author of the *Máāthirul Umarā* has quoted three of its verses in the said biographical work.<sup>41</sup>

Mention may also be made of Allāh Diyā Chishtī, a resident of Pānīpat, who was the nephew of Muqarrab Khān and served under Shāh Jahān. He authored a hagiological work *Siyarul Aqtāb* (1646), dealing with his spiritual pedigree, comprising 27 Chishtī saints. He was closely associated with the noble family of Muqarrab Khān and their estates in Pānīpat and Kairāna. His forefathers including Muqarrab Khān were physicians and surgeons of repute having honours and rewards from the Mughal monarchs.<sup>42</sup>

Muqarrab Khān enjoyed a multi-faceted personality. Jahāngīr in his *Tūzūk* mentions him with great attachment and affection. He lived in immense abundance without any worldly problem for such a long life. He specially strived for best victuals and possessed unusual strong desire for coitus; being insatiable in this regard. He always helped the needy and recommended persons to the emperor. Diyānat Rāi Gujarātī entitled Rāi Rāyān was recommended to Jahāngīr and the





20. *Ibid.*, pp.125, 145.
21. *Ibid.*, p.149.
22. *Ibid.*, p.163.
23. *Ibid.*, p.214.
24. Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op.cit.*, p.380; James Burgess, *The Chronology of Indian History* (Rep.Delhi, 1972), p.72.
25. Jahāngīr, *op.cit.*, p.244.
26. M.Athar 'Alī, *op.cit.*, No.J 1153; Burgess, *op.cit.*, p.78.
27. Jahāngīr, *Op.cit.*, pp.375, 394.
28. Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op.cit.*, p.381.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. For the biography of Bū 'Alī Qalandar (1208-1324), see Sayyid Sabāhūd Dīn, *Bazm-i-Sūfiya* (Āzamgarh, 1949), pp.235-60; Dr.Zuhūrul Hasan Shārib, *Jadid Tadhkira-i-Auliya-i-Pak-u-Hind* (Lāhore, n.d.), pp.104-13.
32. *IG*, Vol.XIV (New ed. Oxford, 1908), p.287; *DGUP*, Muzaffarnagar, p.268-69.
33. *AA*, Vol.II, Jarrett, p.297.
34. *AREp.*, 1967-68, App.D, Nos.264-70; *DGUP*, Muzaffarnagar, p.268.
35. Jahāngīr, *op.cit.*, pp.283, 324; Mūtamid Khān, *Iqbal Nāma-i-Jahāngīr*, Urdū tr.M.Zakariyā Māil (Karāchī, 1963), pp.122-23, 164.
36. *TJ*, Eng.tr., Vol.II, p.193.
37. Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op.cit.*, p.381; *TJ*, Eng.tr., Vol.I, p.332; Khwāja Kāmgār, *op.cit.*, pp.280-81; *AA*, Vol.I, Eng.tr.H.Blochmann, ed.D.C.Phillott (3rd. ed., Calcutta, 1977), p.613.
38. *DGUP*, Muzaffarnagar, pp.159, 319.
39. Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op.cit.*, p.382; *AREp.*, 1988-89, App.C, No.70.
40. D.N.Marshall, *Mughals in India* (London, 1985), pp.288-89.
41. Shāh Nawāz Khān, *op.cit.*, p.382.
42. Marshall, *op.cit.*, p.68; Rieu, *Catalogue*, p.358 b vide *MU*, Eng.tr.Vol.I, p.617 f.n.2.
43. Shaykh Farīd, *op.cit.*, p.273.

## Āsandi Copper Plate of Gaṅga King Arasāṇe

A. V. Narasimha Murthy

TWO COPPER plate inscriptions were discovered at Āsandi, a village in Kadur taluk of Chikkamagalur district of Karnataka, when villagers were digging at a locality known as Kōṭehālu (ruined fort)<sup>1</sup>. The area is rich in mounds, sculptures, pottery and ancient coins and beads. From these evidences it becomes clear that it was an ancient site. Of the two copper plates that were discovered here, one referring to king Arasāṇe is taken up here for a detailed study.<sup>2</sup>

This inscription contains three plates with a ring and an elephant seal. Both sides of all the three copper plates are inscribed with four lines each except the last one which has five lines. Each plate measures 20.5 cms in length, 4.7cms in width and 2mm in thickness. This conforms to the early Gaṅga copper plates so far discovered.

The inscription is written in the Kannaḍa script of the seventh century A.D. It is in Sanskrit language except the boundary portion which is in Kannaḍa. The details of the date (only Phālguna māsa) furnished are not sufficient to determine the exact equivalent.

The inscription opens with the auspicious usage *svasti śrīmat* and does not contain the usual invocatory verse viz., *svasti-jitam-bhagavatō*, etc. Then it introduces king Koṅguṇivarmma with the usually *praśasti*. This is more or less similar to the *praśasti* found in Sāsanakōṭe plates of Mādhavavarman, Nandi plates, Kūḍlūr plates of Harivarman, etc., of the early Gaṅga kings as classified by K.V.Ramesh.<sup>3</sup> Then Mādhava I is mentioned. Afterwards the inscription introduces in succession kings Harivarman, Viṣṇugōpa, Mādhava III, Avinīta, Duṣvīta, Mokkarāṅka (Mushkara), Śrīvikrama, Śrīvallabha also known as Kaṭṭāṇe and his son Arasāṇe who is the issuer of this plate.<sup>4</sup>





The inscription mentions *Mūla-saṅgha* and qualifies it with the epithet *peṇṇilla*. The latter word literally means *womanless*. Can it be taken as *nunless* or *without a nun*. In that case this *Mūla-saṅgha* had no nuns in it. If this is accepted, this should be considered as an interesting and important aspect of this Jaina *saṅgha*. While mentioning the date this epigraph refers to *Rāhukoḷa pāṇigrahaṇa*, which may obviously refer to an eclipse.

Finally, a word must be said about the genuineness of this copper plate. The copper plate contains many orthographical and grammatical errors. There is no uniformity in writing certain letters like *ya*, *ma*, *da* etc. But copper plates containing similar features have been considered genuine by K.V.Ramesh.<sup>15</sup> According to his classification, the present copper plate record comes under the early Gaṅga copper plates. The copper plates generally look like palm leaves. As is the case with the present copper plate they contain four or five lines of writing. The palaeography of these charters is described by the same scholar as archaic Kannaḍa and the present copper plate also belongs to this category. There is a tendency towards squarish nature of each letter. This copper plate can easily be compared to Bedirūr grant of Bhūvikrama or Tagare plates Pōlavira or Pennaūr grant of Durvinita in regard to palaeographical details. Considering all these points, it is felt that this is a genuine copper plate.

### Text

#### First Plate : First Side

- 1 Svasti śrīmat uditōditakula prakir(kṛ)ta - vīryō(rya)yāśasā śrīmat Jāhnavēya
- 2 yōttuṅga-kula-vyōm-avabhāsa śasāṅkasya avi(va)nītala dvijātivayō
- 3 vāsavṛikshasya sva-khaḍga-prahā[ra]khaṇḍita-śilā - stambha - labdha parākrama-dāru
- 4 ṇāriṇaraṇ=ōpalabdha-vraṇō vibhūshi[ta]sya Kāṇvāyanasu(sa) gōtrasya śrīmat

#### First Plate : Second Side

- 5 Koṅguṇivarmmaṇōḥ=putra śrīmat Mādhava - anuddhyātō Mādhavādi - mahārājasya

- 6 tasya putrasya śrīmat Ariva[rmma] - mahādhīrājasya  
tasya putrasya Vi -  
7 śhṇugōpa - mahādhīrājasya [tasya] putrasya śrīmat  
Mādhavādi - ma -  
8 hārājasya tasya putrasya Kada[mba] Kṛishṇavarmma -  
bhāginēyasya śrīmat Koṅgaṇi

### Second Plate : First Side

- 9 mahārājasya Avinītasya tasya putrasya andariyē mahāyud-  
dha vija  
10 ya vallari Lashvi(kshmi)ka(ku)cha - grahaṇa - labdha -  
patākasya Durvvinītasya śrī Koṅgu  
11 ṇi - mahādhīrājasya tasya putrasya śrīmat Mōkkaṛāṅkasya  
tasya putrasya  
12 śrī Vikrama mahādhīrājasya tasya pu[tra]sya śrī  
Vallabhasya mahārājasya śrīmat Ka -

### Second Plate : Second Side

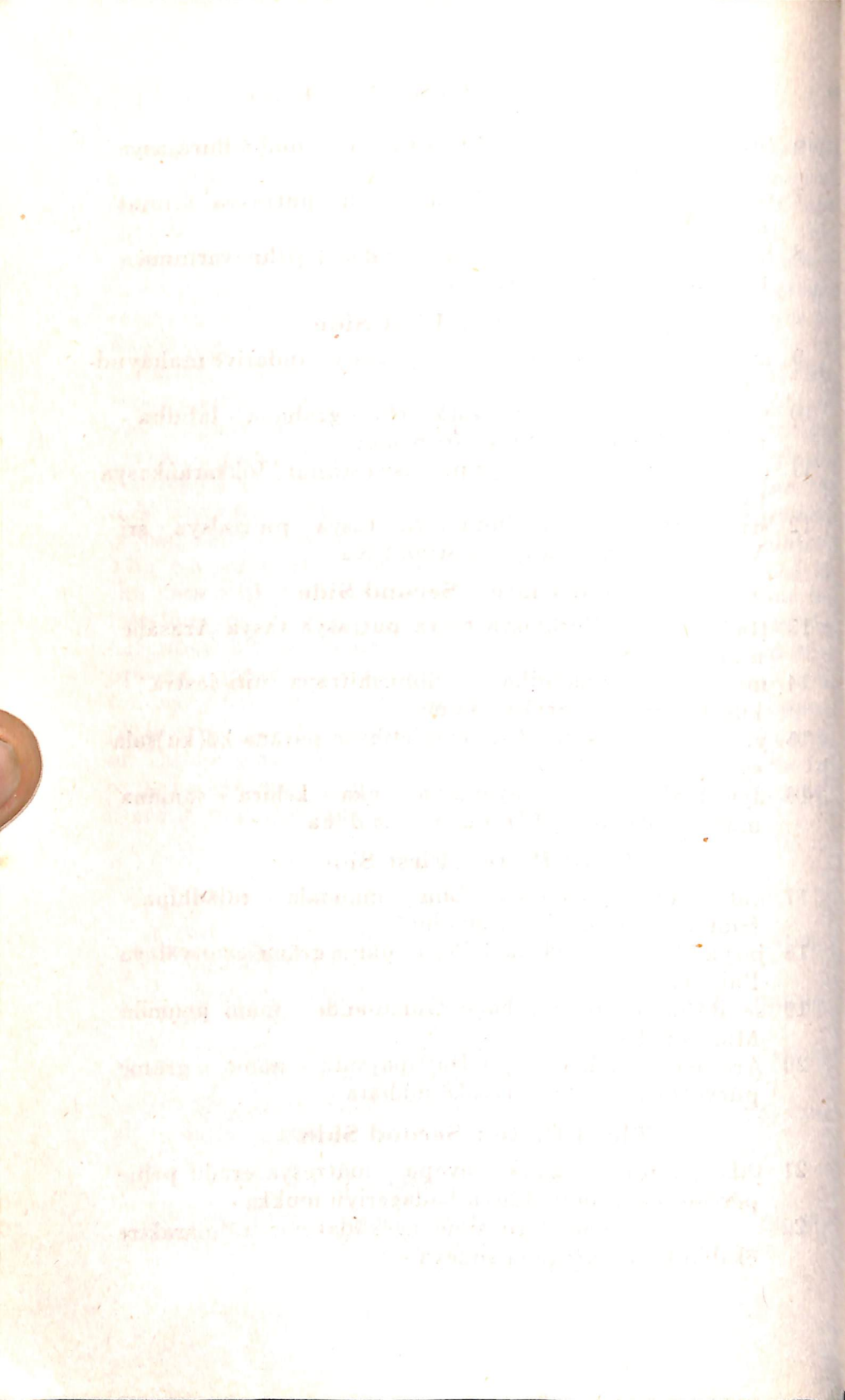
- 13 tṭaṇe - mahādhīrājasya tasya putrasya tasya Arasāṇe  
nāmadhēyasya  
14 mahārājay=ōpalabdha - vibhūshitasya nīti-sāstra -  
kuśal - ānēka - tarkka - sama -  
15 ya-vyākaraṇa-nāṭak-ākhyāyik-ētiḥāsa-purāṇa-kō(ku)śala-  
sya vi  
16 dya(dyā)vṛitta - parāyaṇasya śaṅka - kshīra - sāmāna  
māṭṛi - pitṛi paj(pād)-ōbhaya - śuddha

### Third Plate : First Side

- 17 kul - ānvitasya anēka - bhū - maṇḍala - rājādhipa -  
śrīmat = Koṅguṇi - mahādhīrā -  
18 jasya Maṛugarē - vishayē Peru - nāma grāmē chaityālaya  
Pālguna mā -  
19 se Rāhukola pāṇigrahaṇe Guṇanandi - muni penṇilla  
Mūlasaṅghē  
20 Arasāṇe - mahārāja(je) Dattipajanta - nāma - grāmē  
pūrvōttarē Ghatra - taṭākē mahāta -

### Third Plate : Second Side

- 21 ṭākē panira - kaṇḍuk - avāpa - mātrasya eraḍu pālue  
pēreladō alli ondu aduvu baḍagēriyu mukka -  
22 . . . . nāḍedaru sīme āgekāḍakeyu [tā]marakere  
ēkabhuktam kēlaḡaṇa sīmēya -





supreme Buddha, honoured by the lords of gods, omniscient compassionate towards all sentient beings, freed from lust hatred and delusion which have been conquered by him compared to a bull and a musk elephant among great spiritual leaders and the perfectly enlightened one. Then it refers to the person who made the gift at the Mahāchetiya, (whose name is lost) was described as the uterine sister (*sodara-bhagini*) of Mahārāja Vāsathīputa Ikhāku Siri Chāntamūla, the paternal aunt (*pituchchā*) of king Mādharīputa Siri Vīrapurisadata and the wife of [Mahāsena]pati, Mahātalavara Vāsathīputasa Kāṁdasiri of the family of Pūkiya and who had compassion to Śramaṇas and Brahmins and bestowed them with ceaseless gifts.

Mahārāja Ikhāku Siri Chāntamūla was described as 'Virūpakhapati-Mahāsena-parigahīta' viz., as the one absorbed by Mahāsena, the lord of Virūpākshas (i.e., Skanda), the performer of Agnihōtra, Agnishtōma, [Aśvamēdha and Vājapēya] sacrifices and as the giver of crores of gold (*hiraṇṇa-koti*), hundred thousands of ploughs (*hala-sata-sahasa*). The donor of this āyaka-pillar was certainly the Mahātalavari Chāntasiri, as she was referred to in the inscription as the wife of the Mahāsēnapati, Mahātalavara Vāsathīputa Khandasiri of the Pūkiya family.

As regards the date, since the text of the present inscription closely follows the text of the similar āyaka pillar inscription mentioned above, it may be presumed that the lost portion of the inscription might have contained similar details viz., 6th year of king Siri Vīrapurisadata, the 6th fortnight of rainy season, the 10th day (Sava 6 Vā pa 6 diva 10). Dr. Rama Rao<sup>6</sup> who analysed many views of the historians who have worked on the chronology of this family ascribe the possible ruling periods to Chāntamūla as 220 to 240 A.D., and to his son Vīrapurisadatta as 240 to 280 A.D. On the basis of this the sixth year of the latter falls in 246 A.D. which may be taken as the date of the present record.

Mahāsēnapati, Mahātalavara Kāṁdasiri, the husband of Chamtasiri is mentioned in the inscription as belonging to a family known as Pūkiyas or Pūgiyas. They were believed to be a powerful tribe occupying parts of the Guntur, Nellore and Kurnool districts which formed the region known as

Pūgī-vishaya adjacent to the Ikshvāku kingdom.<sup>7</sup> Mahātalavari Chāmtisiri, the chief donor who was praised in no less than 9 āyaka-pillars was distinctly stated to have been responsible for the erection of the Dhātuvara-Mahāchētiya and other constructions<sup>8</sup> in Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. Buddhism received royal patronage through her as she was powerful and important in the family through her relationship to the reigning king Vīrapurisadatta by her being the paternal aunt (*pituchchā*) and later, by her being as the mother-in-law in giving her daughter in marriage to him.

### Text

- 1 Sidham namo bhagavato devarāja-  
sakatasa supa-budha-bodhino  
savaṃjñino sava satānukāmpakasa
- 2 jita-rāga-dosa-moha-vipamunasa  
mahāgaṇi-vasabha-gaṃdha haṭṭhisa  
saṃma saṃbudhasa-dhā<sup>8</sup> .....
- 3 Mahāchētiye mahārajasa  
virūpakhapati mahāsena parigahitasa  
agihotāgi<sup>9</sup> .....
- 4 [yā]jisa hiraṃnakoti gosata sahasa  
halasatasahasa -padāyisa  
savaṭṭhesu apati[ha]<sup>10</sup> ...
- 5 Vāsīṭhiputasa Ikhāku siri Chāmtamūlasa  
sodarā bhagini raṇo Mādharīputasa  
siri Vīrapurisadatasa pi<sup>11</sup> ..
- 6 . . . . . <sup>12</sup>patisa Mahātalavarasa Vāsīṭhiputasa  
Pūkiyānam Kaṃdasirisa bhariyā-  
samaṇa-ba<sup>13</sup> . . . . .
- 7 ..... <sup>14</sup>vo-chhimna dhāra  
padāyini navā<sup>15</sup> ..... lā-ma<sup>16</sup>
- 8 Rest is lost.





Varaṅga Pāṇḍya II was a great devotee of Lord Śiva. His devotion to Lord Śiva was appreciated in a copper-plate. Paṭṭiṇattār has praised the devotion of Varaṅga Pāṇḍya II (*Periaya-aṇbiṇ Varagunaṭēvar*).<sup>8</sup> Māṇikkavāchagar has praised him as 'Varagunaṇām Tennavaṇ ēttu Siṛṅbalattāṇ' in his *Tiruchchirrambalakkōvaiyār*.<sup>9</sup> Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi also has mentioned about Varaṅga's devotion to Lord Śiva.<sup>10</sup>

Varaṅga Pāṇḍya was also called *Varaṅga Īśvaraṇ*.<sup>11</sup> There are some places in Pāṇḍya-nāḍu which were named after Varaṅga Pāṇḍya II.<sup>12</sup>

### Varaṅga Īśvaram - A Paḷḷippaḍai?

Varaṅga Īśvaram is situated in Chōḷa-nāḍu beyond the boundaries of Pāṇḍya-nāḍu. Epigraphical evidence also refers to Alīndiyūr as 'Varagunaṇapperumāḷnallūr'. Lord Śiva of Varaṅga Īśvaram is mentioned as 'Nāyanār Maṇṇar'. Another epigraph mentions as 'Varaguna Īśvaram-uḍaiya-mahādēvar' to whom a *maṇḍapa* was made and an image was dedicated.

Paḷḷippaḍai temples were administered by a *maṭha* belonging to Mahāvratigaḷ. Lakuliśa-paṇḍitar is one of the Mahāvratins. According to N. Sethuraman<sup>13</sup> epigraphical evidence shows that there was a 'Pichchiyār-maḍam' in Alīndiyūr.

Considering the above evidences we can suggest that Varaṅga Īśvaram at Alīndiyūr (Varagunaṇapperumāḷnallūr) was a Paḷḷippaḍai of Varaṅga Pāṇḍya II.

### Notes and References

1. *Sentamāl*, Vol. VI, pp. 12-17.
2. *Studies in South Indian History and Epigraphy*, p. 139.
3. *Pandiyar Varalaru*, p. 229.
4. *S.I.I.*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 289, 300, 485, 486, 489, 491.
5. *Sivaramangalacheppedu*, 51, 52.
6. *AREp.*, 1921, No. 21.
7. *Thalavayyura cheppedu*, 104.
8. *Thiruvīdai Marudur mumanikkovai*, 34, 35.
9. S. 306, 307.
10. *Koyil Thiruppanniyar Virutham*, 62.
11. *Peruntogai*, 1231  
'Marugonda Mannavarai Vaḍavaraiyil Ēri  
Vallarai Tiraikonarnta Varaguna Īśvaraṇ'
12. *S.I.I.*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 16A, 206, 225.
13. N. Sethuraman, 'Crusade against Guhai (Monastery)', *Journal of Epigraphical Society of India*, Vol. XVII, 29-37.

# Tamil Brāhmī Graffiti from Norhtern Śrīlaṅka

P. Pushparatnam

NORTHERN Śrīlaṅka is historically and traditionally demarcated to the north of Anurādhapura and is recognised as a reign in cultural isolation with rest of the country. Today this region is thickly populated with Tamils. It is referred to as *Nāgadīpam* in Pāli literature and in the Vallipuram gold sheet inscription. It is known as *Nāganādu* in *Śilappadikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*, the two Tamil epics. The marked geographical unit was the reason for the formation of a separate kingdom in course of time and also for the unique cultural, literary and linguistc base. This land mass lies opposite to the Pāṇḍya kingdom in the southern part of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, it serves as a stepping stone for the reception of the cultural waves originating from Tamil Nadu. It also acts as a bridge between Indo-Śrīlaṅkan relationship. It is widely believed on the basis of archaeological evidences that the Mesolithic culture of Śrīlaṅka particularly the northern part and the Megalithic culture that followed might have moved from Tamil Nadu. The occurrence of urn burials, coins of Saṅgam age and Tamil-Brāhmī script further strengthend this view that this cultural contact continued in the Saṅgam age also.

In South Asia, the existence of script can be traced from the Indus Valley civilisation. The pictographic nature of scripts found on the seals prove that the script was known to Harappans. Due to want of satisfactory decipherment they have not been considered for any significant historical research. After the pictography of Indus Valley, a script known to us is of the Brāhmī and it is widely associated with the reign of Aśoka in 3rd century B.C. The inscriptions bearing this script were written in Prakrit language in India except Tamil Nadu. Therefore, they are widely called Aśokan-Brāhmī and on few occasions Northern Brāhmī. This type of script is also found

in the Tamil Nadu both in time and space. But here special letters like *l*, *ḷ*, *r* and *ṇ* typical of Tamil language are found. Letters equivalent to *i* and *m* sounds are also found. Moreover, the language of the inscription is in Tamil. Therefore, this script is variably called as Drāviḍī, Tāmīlī and Tamil Brāhmī (Mahadevan, I, 1966:1).

The Indian connection is solely responsible for the introduction of Brāhmī script in Śrīlanka which has come under the influence of Indian culture from time immemorial. But, there are contradictory opinions regarding when and from which part of India it was introduced.

S. Paranavitana, who had examined more than thousand cave inscriptions found in Śrīlanka, calls it Aśokan-Brāhmī and shows it as evidence for the emigration of the ancestors of the Sinhalese from North India. According to him, the Prakrit language of the inscriptions is the old form of the Sinhala language and the Sinhalese lived in the places where these inscriptions are found (Paranavitana, S., 1970: XVI). He refused to accept the opinion that the nature of cave inscriptions and the form of the script resemble that of the Tamil Nadu inscriptions. Paranavitana explains that the Tamil-Brāhmī script spread to North India first and then reached Śrīlanka from there (Ibid: XVIII).

Before Paranavitana, H. Parkar, who examined the inscriptions found at Periapuliyanikulam in Northern Śrīlanka indicated that the presence of Tamil-Brāhmī script suggested as evidences for the Tamil settlements there (Parkar, 1908:436). P.E.E. Fernando, S. Karunaratna and A. Apayasinha, who have made research on the origin and development of Śrīlankan Brāhmī script in recent times feel that the Southern Brāhmī script was introduced from Tamil Nadu even before Buddhism and Aśokan-Brāhmī in Śrīlanka and that Southern Brāhmī lost its individuality gradually owing to the influence of Aśokan-Brāhmī (Ariyasinghe, 1965:29).

At the sametime there is a traditional belief that the script of the Tamil Nadu had originated from Śrīlanka itself. In support of this, K.V. Raman showed that most of the cave inscriptions in Tamil Nadu were found in the Pāṇḍyan kingdom and that they resemble Śrīlankan Brāhmī inscriptions in structure. However, this view need some attention

to all the letters found in Śrīlankan Brāhmī inscriptions are not found in Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions and *vice-versa*. Aśoka-Brāhmī and Tamil-Brāhmī scripts are alternately used in the most ancient Brāhmī inscriptions of Śrīlanka discovered at Periyapuliyankuḷam, Mihintalai and Siheriya. Certain forms of graffiti appeared on Megalithic pottery acts as an equivalent sound of 'm' in Aśokan-Brāhmī. This letter is rarely used as 'm' in Tamil-Brāhmī (Paranavitana, 1970:26-29). If the Brāhmī script of Śrīlanka had originated from North India then how could two types of Brāhmī script have been used in the early Śrīlankan inscriptions. Therefore, it will be right to say that the Śrīlankan Brāhmī script received the inputs both from Tamil Nadu and North India. Tamil Nadu enjoyed a close commercial relationship both with the Śrīlanka and North India which would have influenced the use of Prakrit words as attested by inscribed potsherds unearthed in the trade centres like Koḍumaṇal, Aḷaṅkuḷam, Arikamēḍu and Uṛaiyūr.

When compared with the other parts of Śrīlanka only a very few Brāhmī cave inscriptions have been found in Northern Śrīlanka. Even these limited inscriptions too were concentrated in the Vāvuniya district, north of ancient capital of Anurādhapura. But it does not mean that the people who lived here were not aware of the script. The evidences found on pottery, goldensheet, copper and bricks in the sites like Vallipuram, Kondarōdai, Āṇaikōḍḍai, Poonakary and Varani clearly proved that they used the script extensively.

The Poonakary region acts as a buffer zone between the mainland of Śrīlanka and Jaffna Peninsula. This name refers to the vast area covering from Kalmonai in the north and the Chōḷamaṇḍalam in the south. This region has not been taken for any historical research for a long period. The archaeological survey conducted by the author during 1989-91 and by P. Ragupathy in 1981 brought to light the cultural wealth of this region (Ragupathy, 1987:38-41). The most remarkable findings were the inscribed potsherds with Tamil-Brāhmī script obtained from Megalithic sties. These were found in places like Mannithalai Veddukkāḍu, Paramankera, Elavūr and Vīrapāṇḍiyanmunai. Of these, Mannithalai, Veddukkāḍu and Paramankera are situated in a close proximity. In Mannithalai

itself sixteen potsherds with Tamil-Brāhmī script have been found. Two sherds in the midst of megalithic artifacts have been obtained at Elavūr.

This and the inscribed potsherds found at nearby village Vīrapāṇḍiyanmunai were collected from the deposits of a well. Therefore, these may be considered as an evidence received from unorganised archaeological excavation.

Most of the potsherds contain one or two letters and were broken in crucial places. A few have one or two words expressing the name of a person or a place. These names have been engraved on the shoulder portion of a small pot and plates mostly on the interior surface. A few are written on interior surface and some are found in association with graffiti marks. A few of the scripts are inscribed lightly while the others are deep and very legible. Generally the letters are small. These potsherds can be dated back to 3rd and 2nd century B.C. on palaeographical grounds.

The four letters peculiar to Tamil language namely *l*, *l̥*, *r*, *n*, were found on these sherds. The letter *n̥* usually occurs at the end of the words. This is obviously used to indicate Tamil male personal names which usually end with *n̥*. The shape of the letters *i* and *m* are also of Tamil-Brāhmī variety. The forms of the script resemble more or less the letters found in cave inscriptions of Tamil Nadu.

A potsherd containing three letters is found at Paramankeraī. It is not known whether it is an independent word or a broken phrase. Giving the sound of *vē* and *i* to the first two letters, we can read it as *vēl* and *vēla*. (Fig. 1) The third letter is possibly *tu*. I. Mahadevan identified it as *Vēlan* (Mahadevan, I., 1994:35). In Saṅgam literature names like *Vēl*, *Vēlir* and *Vēla* do occur. These names refer to the chiefs and *Vēl* clan of the Saṅgam period. As the name *Vēlan* obtained from Paramankeraī resembles the Saṅgam period name. Mahadevan feels that this inscription refers to the Tamil *Vēlir* or *Vēlāḷan* settled in Poonakery during the Saṅgam period.

In another pottery obtained here has four letters. The fourth letter could be considered as graffiti mark or a letter. The first three letters can be read as *tatta*. In another pot, there are two letters reading *tan*. The end letter *n̥* may indicate the name of a male. The potsherds

contained from Koḍumaṇal, had the name like Kaṇṇaṇ Ḍaṇ, Pannaṇ ending with *a* (Rajan 1994:82). This similarity can be attributed to the names obtained from Paramankeraī too.

Two inscribed potsherds were obtained from Mannitalai, the western boundary village of Paramankeraī. The first one had two letters reading *ila* (Fig. 2). There are three letters in the second potsherd. We can give the sound equivalent of *i* to the first letter. The letter *i* occurring in the cave inscriptions and pottery has a straight line flanked by a dot. The second letter is *i* of Tamil. The third letter with a little gap looks like a small vertical line. The first two letters can be read as '*ila*'. The two above-mentioned names refer to the name of the country, Ilam. These names may be considered to refer to the owners of the containers as the phrases like *kula antai camban akal* found at Koḍumaṇal and *Mutikuluran akal* at Arikamēdu (Wheeler 1946:113) clearly attest this.

Obtaining Tamil-Brāhmī letters to Poonakary in more numbers following Vallipuram, Kantharōḍai and Ānaikoḍḍai of northern Śrīlaṅka has thrown new light are the historical research of northern Śrīlaṅka. They help us to learn the antiquity and the language of the region. Recently, inscribed potshreds have been found at Anurādhapura in Śrīlaṅka and at Alagankulam, Uṛaiyūr and Koḍumaṇal in Tamil Nadu. They are more in number than in Poonakary. Anurādhapura inscribed potshreds have been assigned to 500-750 B.C. But these letters show common characteristics with the letters obtained from Poonakary and Tamil Nadu. Moreover, special letters peculiar to Tamil Language have also been obtained from pottery, when this similarity is noted. It can very well be said that the influence of Tamil Nadu over Śrīlaṅka particularly northern Śrīlaṅka is quite clear.

### Acknowledgement

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## A Langudi Hill Inscription Referring to Aśoka

B. N. Mukherjee

THE REMAINS of a Buddhist establishment on the Langudi hill, situated not very far from Bhubaneswar (Orissa) and very near the National Highway no.5, has already been identified with the Pushpagiri Vihāra, mentioned by Hsüan-Tsang (or Xuan-Zwang).<sup>1</sup> The evidence of some epigraphs of early centuries A.D., found here, have suggested this identification.<sup>2</sup>

There are a number of fragmentary inscriptions in early Brāhmī script on a block of rock at the same site. One side of the rock displays *stūpas* and Buddhist figures, hewn out of it.<sup>3</sup> Another portion of the rock, the upper part of which, has a depression, bears some fragmentary Brāhmī inscriptions of the early centuries A.D. A few inscriptions, each of which is too fragmentary to yield any definite meaning or clear indication about it, are noticeable on the depressed portion of the rock, which may be due to a natural formation or due to an attempt to take a block of stone out of it for using it for some purpose.

A fragmentary epigraph begins in the uppermost fringe of the lower section of the rock and continues in its depressed part. Just below the opening section of this epigraph commences an inscribed line, the better part of which is engraved along the carved line, which marks off the depressed part from the raised section. The line concerned, written in Brāhmī, is readable from inside. Just below the beginning of this incised line, commences another line written "vertically" in relation to the upper line. So it does not run as a line parallel to the first line. The second line is very fragmentary, and can be read from outside. Hence, the two inscribed lines, to be read from two different sides (inside and outside) need not be from two parts of a single record. In other words, the inscription indicated by the upper line consists of a single line. The other inscription, commencing below the first letters of the upper line, belongs to a different record. (fig. 1).

The inscription engraved in the first line is also fragmentary. The remaining portion of it shows that it was not incised very carefully. An eye-copy of the inscription can be produced as follows (see also fig. 1).

The first two words are *āmi* and (*upāsa*)*ka* or (*upāsa*)*ke*. The character read as *ke* (*ka + e*) can also be taken as standing only for *ka*, if the alleged stroke for medial *e* is considered as a curve to the left at the top of the letter due to the cursive style of writing (a feature betrayed also by some other letters). The next word can be deciphered as *Asokasa*. Here, however, the strokes for medial *o* in *so* are placed below the top of the letter *sa*. Moreover, the forms of the first and third *sa* are more developed than (or of a variety different from) that of the second *sa*. But both these forms were used in the Kushāṇa period from atleast the time of Kanishka I (c. 78-101 A.D). There is also evidence of the use of the both the forms of *sa* in the same Kushāṇa record.<sup>3</sup>

The next word is *Samchi amānā* (if the line slanting downwords from the right of the upper section of *ma* is taken as a stroke for medial *ā*). The following readable portion of the epigraph can be transcribed as *agra'eka thūphe*. There are traces of a number of letters (8 to 10) in the last part of the line. But this part cannot be read with any amount of certainty.

In the light of the above discussion we can now read the inscription as follows *Āmi (upāsa)ka Asokasa samchi'amānā agra'eka thūphe.....*

The inscription is obviously written in a form of Prakrit. Its palaeographical features, as indicated above, tend to date it to the late 1st or 2nd century A.D.<sup>4</sup>

The extant portion of the inscription can now be Sanskritised and translated as follows.

#### Text

Āminah Upāsakasya Asokasya  
samchitamānānām agre 'ekasmin stūpe.....

#### Translation

"..... in a prominent *stūpa* of the accumulated heights of Asoka, the lay-worshipper, [and] the one with religious longings".

While there is no doubt about the import of the word *upāsaka*, our translation of the word *āmi* < *āmī* requires an

explanation. The word *āma* has been used in certain Buddhist texts as implying "religious longings".<sup>5</sup> Hence, *āmi*, *āmī* < (*āma* + *in*, in the sense of "having") can denote *inter alia* a person having religious longings. Such an interpretation of the word is in consonance with the following term *upāsaka*, 'lay-worshipper'.

The record seems to refer to something (mentioned in the unreadable portion of the inscription) connected with a *stūpa*, which was believed in c. 2nd century A.D. to have been caused to be built by a Buddhist lay-worshipper called Aśoka. The expression "accumulated height" may well be a metaphorical allusion to a *stūpa*, which was essentially a mound accumulated upto a certain height (over some sort of a relic and/or dedicated to some divinity or erected for some purpose).

The name of the lay-worshipper Aśoka reminds us of one of the greatest Buddhist lay-worshippers of that name, the Maurya emperor Aśoka. (c.272-236 B.C.). Ancient Kāliṅga, which included the Langudi hill area, was very much a part of his empire. In fact, he followed Buddhism after the Kāliṅga war. Traditionally he is credited with the erection of a large number of *stūpas*. There are also historical data connecting him with a number of *stūpas*.<sup>6</sup> A Kharoshthī epigraph from Taxila, belonging to the Kushāṇa age, describes the Dharmarājikā (*viḥāra*) as the one established by King Aśoka.<sup>7</sup> According to tradition, recorded by Huiyen-Tsang in the 7th century A.D., there were ten Aśoka *stūpas* in Wu-t'u (Oḍra) of his time<sup>8</sup>, which had been a part of Kāliṅga in the days of Aśoka.<sup>9</sup>

All these data, however, does not prove that the Maurya emperor Aśoka actually caused the erection of a *stūpa* in the Buddhist establishment later known as Pushpagiri-viḥāra.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the epigraph under review surely indicates that there was a belief current in the area concerned in c. 2nd century A.D. that the then *stūpa* of the Pushpagiri-viḥāra had been caused to be built by a lay-worshipper called Aśoka. The latter can, as shown above, very well be identified with the famous Maurya emperor Aśoka, who was a Buddhist lay-worshipper with great "religious longings". Herein lies the importance of the epigraph.

# Notes and References

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7. *JESI*, Vol. XVI, 1990, pp. 32-33; see also J. Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. I, Cambridge, 1951, pp. 234-235.
8. *Ta T'ang Hsi-yü-chi*, Chuan 10.
9. See also above n.1.
10. See also n.1.

# A Note on Sunkēśula Inscription of Vijayāditya

M. D. Sampath

THIS INSCRIPTION is engraved on a stone lying near a big well at Sunkēśula in Pulivendla Taluk in Cuddaph District of Andhra Pradesh. It was noticed in the Annual Report of the State Archaeology Department, Andhra Pradesh in 1966 as No.20. Dr.P.V.Parabrahma Sastri was kind enough to send an estampage of this record in 1979 for examination. It is as a result of the kind permission of Sri Sastri who was the Deputy Director for Epigraphy and Chief Epigraphical Officer in the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, the present record has been edited here. The text of it has been published in the *Inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh, Cuddapah District*, part I edited by Dr.P.V.Parabrahma Sastri in 1977.<sup>1</sup>

The characters are Telugu-Kannada of about the 8th century. The record on two sides consists of six lines in all. A few letters at the right end of the first side seem to be missing. The language is Telugu.

A comparison in the formation of individual letters of this record with the Turimella inscription<sup>2</sup> reveals certain similarities. For example, the letters *k* and *r* are joined fully as in the word *śarmāriki* (line 4). The early features that can be seen in letters like *j*, *m* and *bh* resemble those found in the Turimella record. In the place of archaic form of four-chambered *ṛ* seen in the Turimella record, here it is divided by a horizontal line which is definitely later than the former form. The Dravidian *ṛ* occurs thrice in the words *maruntuṛlēla* (line 4) and *vēṿrupāra* (line 5). The vowel *i* is an early form occurring in the word *ichchinadi* (line 4). The medial *ā* is indicated by a downward curve at the top of the consonant on its right side as in *rā*, *mā*, *nā*, *pā* and *vā*. The subscript *ṛ* has a horizontal bar which is no doubt a later form than the one which has a vertical stroke as observed in

the Turimella inscription. In our record the earlier *j* is still retained whereas in the Tippalūru record of Vikramāditya II,<sup>3</sup> the later form occurs throughout the record. On account of these features, the present record can be placed before the reign period of Vikramāditya II,<sup>4</sup> the successor of Vijayaditya and during the early years of the latter (acc.696 A.D.).

Of the orthographical features the consonant following the *rēpha* is not doubled in *śarmaṇa* and *śarmāriki* (line 4). The word *vēvru* (line 5) is an archaic form of *vēyi* meaning 'thousand'. The two words *vēvru* and *pāra* (line 5) when compounded takes the form *vēvrubāra*.<sup>5</sup> The sandhi has been observed in the case of *dharmuḷavā[ru\*]n + tāgi* (line 6). The use of dental *n* in the ligatures, a common feature in early Telugu records can be noticed here. e.g., *vachu(chchu)vānru*, *charṇpunavanru* (line 5). The use of plural *vāru* in *dharmuḷavā[ru\*]* (line 6) in the imprecatory portion in the place of singular *\*vanru*<sup>6</sup> may be noted. The cerebral *ṇ* occurs in the words *ēḷu* (lines 2, 3) and *pāḷa* (lines 2, 3).

The object of the record is to register the grant of fifty *marunturḷu* of land to Vinnaśanna, son of Charuvaśarma belonging to Kāśyapa-gōtra by Kuppamdiyāru, who was ruling Prālūru on behalf of (*pāḷa*) Vajraga[m]tirāju, who was administering from Ḹōmuḍa. This chief must have been ruling on behalf of and as a subordinate of Vāṇarāju who extended his limits as far as the south of Pennār river.

This Bāṇa king, while he was ruling Sūramāra-vishaya on behalf of the reigning king Vijayāditya - Satyāśraya - Prithivī-vallabha, is stated to have attacked the Rēnāṇḍu territory.

The present inscription is interesting from the point of view of the political situation of the Āndhra country during the reign period of the Chalukyas of Bādāmi and their Bāṇa feudatories. The Bāṇas were subordinates of the Chalukyas not only during the reign of Vijayāditya but even earlier. It has been said already that they were originally the feudatories of the Pallavas of Kāñchī and later subjugated by the Chalukyas during the time of Pulakēśin II (610-42 A.D.).<sup>7</sup> Thus the chiefs of the Bāṇa family continued to occupy their native land as vassals of the Chalukyas. Several inscriptions of Vijayāditya attest to the rule of Bāṇa chiefs over this region.<sup>8</sup>

The Bāṇa subordinates of the Chlukyas under Vijayāditya were ruling over Vaṅganūr-vishaya was revealed for the first time by the Kōṭṭūru inscription of his 4th year (c.699-700 A.D.). The name of the Bāṇa chief who was governing the Vaṅganūr-vishaya at this time is not specified in the Kōṭṭūru record.<sup>9</sup> Also our epigraph refers to a Bāṇa chieftain (Vāṇarāju) without giving his name, as the subordinate of Vijayāditya and as ruling over Sūramāra-vishaya, on behalf of (*pāḷa*) his overlord. The Turamāra-vishaya or Sūramāra-vishaya where these chiefs administered, bordered on Rēnāṇḍu over which the Telugu-chōḷas ruled. Since the Vāṇarāju of the present epigraph is stated to have attacked Rēnāṇḍu, which is to the south of the river Peṇṇār, while he was controlling Suramāra-vishaya, it is not possible to suggest the identity of this chief with his namesake, the ruler of Vaṅganūr-vishaya figuring in the Kōṭṭūru record of Vijayāditya. Thus these two are different chiefs though they belong to one and the same family. On the other hand, it is not improbable to suggest that Vāṇarāju of our inscription is identical with the Bāṇa chief Vikramāditya Bali Indra Bāṇarāja of the Koṇḍapalli inscription.<sup>10</sup> As they are stated to have been in occupation of the Turamāra-vishaya or Sūramāra-vishaya, the identity is rendered all the more possible. It has been pointed out above, and mentioned in another inscription of Vijayāditya from Rāgōlu, Sirvel Taluk, Kurnool District,<sup>11</sup> that the Bāṇas have extended their rule from the north of the river Peṇṇār to the south of the river into Rēnāṇḍu. In the light of these evidences, it may be said that the Bāṇas seem to have become more powerful than the Telugu-Chōḷas under the influence of the Chlukyas. Not only at the period of our record under discussion but also during the reign of Vikramāditya II, the successor of Vijayāditya,<sup>12</sup> the limits of the Peṇṇār river were under the control of a chief named Pōrmukharāma on behalf of a Bāṇa King (*Bāṇarājula-pāḷa*).

In the record under discussion, a Kuppamdiyāru, the ruler of Prālūru is mentioned as the donor. By considering the proximity of this place to Korrapa[rū] from where another Kuppadiyāru is found to be ruling on behalf of a Perbāṇādhirāju,<sup>13</sup> it is not unlikely that these two persons are identical. The latter place has been identified with Korrapāḍu in Jammalamadugu Taluk which lay adjuscent to Pulivendla Taluk. The villages Lōmuḍā and Prālūru are identical with the

present Lōmaḍa and Pālūru in Pulivendla Taluk of Cuddapah District. These villages are located on the southern bank of Penṇār river.

### Text<sup>14</sup>

#### First Side

- 1 Svasti[II\*] Śrī - Vijayāditya = satyāśraya - śrī - prīthuvivallabha - mahārājādhirāja - paramēśvarabha (vara - bha)<sup>15</sup> [tārā\*]
- 2 vāri pā[la] Vāṇarājula [Sū]ramāra - viśhaya[m]b = ēluchu Rēnāṇḍu poḍichi goṇi(ni) Penna - dakṣhiṇa ....
- 3 Vajraga[m]tirāju Lōmuḍal = ēlūvāri pāla Kuppamḍiyāru Prālūr = ēluchu Kāśyapa - gō-
- 4 [narla] Charuvaśarmaṇa putra Vinnaśarmārikin = ē[m]badi marunturlēla (rnela)ichchinadi dīni[ki vakrambu]

#### Second Side

- 5 vachu(chchu)vānru pañcha - mahāpātakunr = agu vēvru - pāra chaṁpunāvanru[pō]-
- 6 guvā[ppo]lu muḍula mērmula kālu[m]garigānu dharmula - vā[ru\*]n = tāginavāru [II\*]

### Notes and References

1. Inscriptions of A.P., Cuddapah District, Part I, (1977), No.38.
2. Above, Vol.XXIX, pp.160 ff and plate facing p.162.
3. Above, Vol.XXX, p.13 and plate facing p.16.
4. Above, Vol.XXX, p.13 ff.
5. A.R.Ep., 1940-51, No.B 418, Text lines 15-16.
6. Above, Vol.XXX, p.13.
7. Above, Vol.XI, pp.230-34; above, Vol.XXX, p.15, note 2 and p.70; above, Vol.XXXVIII, p.120.
8. Above, Vol.XXVIII, p.243; above, Vol.XXXVIII, pt.VII, p...
9. Above, Vol.XXX, pp.69 ff and plate facing p.71.
10. SII., Vol.X, No.23; Above, Vol.XXX, p.70.
11. Above, Vol.XXXVII, p.243.
12. Above, Vol.XXX, pp.14 ff and plate facing p.16.
13. AREp., 1940-41, No.B 418; *ibid.*, Part II, para 13, p.232.
14. From photographs.
15. The letter below *ra* looks like *bha*, apparently it stands for *rbha*<sup>0</sup>-

# Sealings in Buddhist votive Stūpas from Rājaghaṭṭa

Rajaram Hegde

RĀJAGHAṬṬA is located in the Bangalore district of Karantaka State. To the western part of the present village can be traced the remains of early historic settlements which is almost destroyed due to digging activities of the villages. There are also few megaliths in this site. The importance of this site has been already brought to light by archaeologists.<sup>1</sup> The antiquities found in this site include early historic brick structures, pottery, beads, etc.

Recently the present author happened to come across a couple of votive *stūpas* in burnt clay which were originally found in Rājaghaṭṭa.<sup>2</sup> It is told that such clay *stūpas* are abundantly found in a field newly brought under cultivation. Some of them were simply dried in the sun while others were burnt in kilns. The former ones broke easily and villagers discovered tiny clay seals inside them. The author also visited the site to examine the spot where these *stūpas* were found. It is thoroughly converted into a field now. The field is tilled and brick bats and the fragments of votive *stūpas* are scattered in the field. The author could collect a couple of intact *stūpas* but unfortunately could not recover the ones already picked up by the villagers.

Two seals which were originally placed in these *stūpas* are examined by the author. They contain a six line inscription in third or fourth century Brāhmī characters. One of them is fully intact while the letters in the others are partially erased. Both of them are inscribed with the Buddhist creed or *gāthā dhārinī* which is as follows:

- 1 "Ye dhammā -
- 2 hetu ppabhayā te -
- 3 sa hetu tathā gato
- 4 ā ha tesse (tēssn=cha?) cha yo ni -
- 5 rodho eva vādi ma -

6 hā-samaṇo”

The above line is a *gāthā* being a part of *pratiya samutpada* (chain of causation). The meaning of the above lines are given by Rhys Davids as, ‘of all objects which proceed from a cause the *Tathāgatha* has explained the cause, and he has explained their cessation also, this is the doctrine of the great Samana.’

This was the most common practice of the Mahāyāna Buddhists right from the Kushāṇa period as noticed in different Buddhist centres by the archaeologists.<sup>4</sup> As the Buddhist tradition prescribes that such creed should be inscribed on copper plates, stone slabs or clay tablets and deposited in the votive stūpas or it should be inscribed on the stūpas or images. This was a practice of the Buddhist devotees as found in the archaeological remains from Nalanda, The Lauriya Nandangarh, Devnimori, etc. most important site for this context is Ratnagiri from Orissa. The remains ranging from 5th to 13th century A.D. in this site reflect the above practice in vogue throughout the period. The stūpas of different size, prepared of various materials like stone and terracotta are found in hundreds of numbers in this site.<sup>5</sup> We see both the practices of offering the stūpas and Buddhist images. The *gāthas* were carved on stone slabs and placed inside such votive stūpas whereas they were inscribed on the images of the Vajrayāna pantheon. In the later period *dharaṇis* also were used for similar purpose and it was believed that dedication of one such stūpa was equal to that of one lakh of Tathāgatha *chaityas*.<sup>6</sup>

The Chinese pilgrim I Tsing also records this religious practice of the Indian Buddhists during his visit to India in the second half of the 7th century A.D. The Indians made the *chaityas* of gold, silver, copper, iron, earth, lacquer, bricks and stone which consisted two kinds of *sarīras* 1) the relics of Buddha and 2) the creed of the chain of causation mentioned above.<sup>7</sup> They were of various sizes and the smallest ones were of the size of a small jujube. This is a living tradition in the Tibetan Buddhism where it is known as Tsha Tsha type of stūpa.<sup>8</sup> The *sahajavilāsa* provides details of preparation of Tsha Tshas. The clay ones are prepared of bronze moulds with wooden handles. The clay stūpas thus prepared are either burnt or dried in the Sun. A hole is provided at the bottom

to insert the scrolls having the *creed* inscribed on them. The bottom was then sealed by clay or wax. This type of Tsha Tsha is known as Spituk in Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>9</sup>

The finds from Rājaghaṭṭa exemplify the existence of such practices in the ancient Karnataka also. So far it seems that Rājaghaṭṭa is the only site which yields such an evidence. The available *stūpas* are of varied sizes having a diameter of 7 to 5 cm. People here used both burnt and unburnt varieties of clay *stūpas*. Comparing to those of Ratnagiri, these are more archaic in appearance. These *stūpas* have plain *tumuli* with a stepped *harmica* at the top. Stylistically they don't have a drum at the base further elongating the height of the *tumuli* which is the case of the third century *stūpas* of Andhra. Quite interestingly the *gāthā* is written in its original Pali version which was converted into Sanskrit in the later period in the sites like Amarāvati.<sup>10</sup> Even I Tsing provides the Sanskrit version of this creed showing that by 7th century the Sanskrit versions were in vogue in India.

The Brāhmī characters on the seals examined may be approximately assigned to 3rd century A.D. Though the compulsion of writing on a tiny surface might have effected the orthographic features, certain obvious peculiarities can be listed as follows.

Angularity is discernible in the letter like *ya*, *pa*, *dha*.

*va*, *da* is rectangular while *va* is triangular in shape. This is also the case with the loop of *ma* and *ta* also betray angular features.

The letter like *ga*, *ha* are rounded. *Ha* has its lower arm prominently curved.

The medial vowels are usually curved and slightly elongated in the case of *ā*, *u*, *e* and *o* as noticed in *mā*, *tu*, *he* and *dho*. The medial *i* is known as a tiny circle above the letter as in the case of *ni* and *di*.

The letter *ṇa* is at the transition of becoming an open variety of fourth century.

### Notes and References

1. The site has been noticed by Mr. Visvanath, and reported by Sri Nagaraj Sharma, Mysore.

2. The author is thankful to Miss.Nirmala who informed him about it and gave two specimens of the *stupas* as well as a clay seal. The author is also thankful to Mr. Jagadeesh for his valuable assistance.
3. *Mahavagga I* 23.5 Sacred books of the East-Ed. Rhys Davids and Herman Oldenburg.
4. Debala Mitra, *Ratnagiri*, (1958-61), Pt. I ASI, 1983, New Delhi, p. 30.
5. *Ibid.*, PL, LVI to LXXXI.
6. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVI, 1942, p.171-174. An inscription from Bhubhanesvar contains such a statement.
7. Itsing, *Records of the Buddhist Religion in India and Malay Archipelago A.D. 671-695*, Trans. Takakushu J. Oxford, 1896, p. 151.
8. Pema Dorjee, *Stupa and its Technology. A Tibeto-Buddhist Perspective*. Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts, Delhi, 1996, p.30.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 108, Pl, XXXVI, XXXVII.
10. I.K Sharma, "Some Inscriptions from Amarāvati Excavations and the Chronology of the Mahāchaitya," *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, Vol. I, 1975, p. 66-75, Pl. XIII, B and Fig. 83. .

## Two Brāhmī inscriptions from Mathurā

*Jai Prakash*

THE TWO inscriptions<sup>1</sup> edited below with the kind permission of the Director (Epigraphy), Archaeological Survey of India, Mysore, were discovered at Mathurā, District Mathura, Uttar Pradesh and now preserved in the State Archaeological Museum at Mathurā. They were copied by me in August 1994 and January 1999 respectively.

For the sake of convenience, we shall call them No.1 and No.2. The inscription No.1 was commented upon by Shri Satya Shrava.<sup>2</sup> Since the readings and translation, given by him are faulty, the inscription has now been re-edited.

Both the inscriptions are engraved on the circular bases of two separate pillars. There are in all two lines of writing in each inscription. Individual *aksharas* are about 1.5 cm in height, though a few letters including conjunct consonants endowed with vowel marks are bigger in size. The writing is in a fairly good state of preservation.

The characters belong to the Brāhmī alphabet as used in the inscriptions of the Kushāṇa period. The form *m* in line 1 is interesting and unique and bears comparison to the *m* found in the Gupta epigraphs.<sup>3</sup> The letters *t* and *v* may be compared with those of the Kushāṇa epigraphs of this period from Mathura.<sup>4</sup> Of the initial vowels, *e* and *u* occur in line 1 and *ā* in lines 1 and 2. Of the numerical symbols, 30, 3, 1 and 2 have been used in line 1.

The language of the epigraph is Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit. The date is quoted as *hē 1 di 2* (i.e., the second day in first month of Hēmantā or the winter season) in the year 33 apparently of the Śaka era.<sup>5</sup> It corresponds to 111-112 A.D.

The texts of both the inscriptions are almost similar except for few addition, replacement and probably omission. In inscription No.1 *saṅghē chatudīśē* is not found but in inscription No.2 it is added. The expression *darakanam*

in inscription No.1 is replaced by *sarvasyēva parivarasya* in inscription No.2. The expression *upāsakanam* of inscription No.1 is not found in the inscription No.2.

The inscription is in prose. It records the gift of pillar-base (*kumbhaka*), during the reign of *Mahārāja Dēvaputra*, Huvishka, on the date given above, in their *vihāra* (monastery) by the worshipper brothers *Buddharakshita* and *Dharmarakshita* from Taxila for the acceptance of *Sarvāsti-vādin* teachers to the community of the four quarters and for worship of the parents, all families and for the sentient beings and for their long life, welfare and happiness.

Thus we can say that two more inscriptions are added to the list of already known inscriptions of Huvishka.

We find for the first time the reference to *Sarvāsti-vādin* sect from the above mentioned inscriptions of Huvishka.

The solitary place name mentioned in the record, *Takshaśilā* is no doubt identical with the modern Taxila and this place occurs for the first time in the inscriptions of Huvishka.

### Inscriptions

#### No.1

#### Text<sup>6</sup>

- 1 Mahārājasya dēvaputrasya Huvishkasya samvatsarē 30  
3 Hemanta māsē 1 divasē 2 ētasyaṁ pūrvāyāṁ  
upāsakanam Buddharakshita Dharmarakshitanaṁ  
bhratraṇaṁ Sōmaputraṇaṁ brahmaṇanaṁ Upavaṇa-  
sagōtraṇaṁ Takhaśilākanam dānam kubhakaṁ svakē  
vihārē tōyīyaṁ acharyyanaṁ Sarvāsti-vādinam parigrah am
- 2 ātmanasya ārōga dākshīṇya mātā pitraṇaṁ pūjārtham  
darakanam cha dīrghayū katayam sarva-satvanam hita  
sukhārtha

#### No.2

#### Text<sup>7</sup>

- 1 Mahārājasa dēvaputrasya Huvishkasya sam 30 3  
Hē 1 di 2 ētasyaṁ pūrvayāṁ Buddharakshita  
Dhamarakshitanaṁ bhratraṇaṁ Sōmaputraṇaṁ brāhmaṇam  
Upavaṇa-sagōtraṇaṁ Takhaśilākanam dānam kubhakaṁ  
svakē vihārē tōyīyaṁ saṅghē chatudīsē ācharyanaṁ  
Sarvāsti-vādinam parigraha

- 2 ātmānasya ārōga dakṣhiṇya mātā pitraṇaṁ pūjārtha  
sarvasyēva parivarasya dirghayū kataya sarva-satvanam  
hita sukhārtha

### Translation [of Inscription No.2]

In the year 33 of Mahārāja Dēvaputra Huvishka, in the first month of the winter season, on the second day, on this date worshipper brothers Buddhārakhita and Dharmarakṣita, sons of the brāhmaṇa Sōma of Upavaṇa gōtra [hailing] from Takhasīlā made this gift of pillar-base in their own monastery for the acceptance of Sarvāstivādi teachers to the community of the four quarters and for their health and courtesy (and) for worship of parents (and) for long life (and) welfare and happiness of all families and all sentient beings.

### Notes and References

1. They are accessioned in the Museum as 89.64 and 97.55 respectively.
2. Satya Shrava, *Dated Kushāṇa Inscriptions*, pp.68 ff.
3. *C.I.I.*, Vol.III (Revised), pp.272 ff.
4. *Mathura Inscriptions* (ed.by Janert) No.14, pp.44 ff; *Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XL, pp.168 to 169, No.32.
5. Some scholars opine that the era used in the Kushāṇa inscriptions is different from Śāka era. According to them the Kushāṇa era started sometime in 144-45 A.D. and it was initiated by Śāka king Chashtāna. See Ajay Mitra Shāstri, "Śāka Era", *Indian Journal of History of Science*, Vol.31 (1), 1996, pp.67 ff.
6. From impressions.
7. From impressions.

# The art of Composing Chronograms

G. S. Khwaja

THE ART of the composing chronograms practised only in Arabic and Persian languages and also lately in Urdu language attained such an important place, particularly in the medieval period of history, that without touching it the history of literature of these languages cannot be called complete. Specially this art has gone a long way hand in hand with calligraphy to affect the science of Epigraphy to a great extent.

The art of composing chronograms was designed for the first time by Arabs and *Hisāb-āl-Jamal* was the name given to the method in which every letter of alphabet was assigned with a numerical value with an arrangement in a particular sequence called 'Abjad System'.

Primarily there were only 22 letters in this set of Alphabet but Arab-nomades, to accommodate some of their own phonemes, added six more signs to make it 28. Interestingly all these signs represent only consonants. Arabs used to add orthographic marks to the consonants, as vowels, for specific pronunciation.

In Arabic language, there existed no system to denote mathematical numbers or figure work in the form of cardinals. The idea of cardinals was borrowed by Arabs from India in 8th century A.D. Before that they were using Arabic letters for this purpose. The use of letters as numerals was limited to the following fields:

- i) Astrolabes
- ii) Chronograms in epigraphs and poetry
- iii) Devinatory procedures and talismans
- iv) Pagination of prefaces and table of contents in books.

Arabs had given each letter a numerical value according to its position, in the serial order they had adopted from Greeks. These 28 letters were thus divided into three successive series of nine each i.e. Units (1-9) Tens (10-90) Hundreds (100-900) and only one letter, the twentyeight one, was given the value of 1000.

In this way the table of alphabet with the numerical value of each letter is as follows:

**The Table of Alphabet arranged as per Abjad System**

1	Alif	a, ā	1	
2	Bā (Pā)	b (P)	2 (2)	Persian letter
3	Jīm (che)	J (ch)	3 (3)	Persian letter
4	Dāl	d	4	
5	Hā	h	5	
6	Wāw	w, v	6	
7	Zā (zha)	z (zh)	7 (7)	Persian letter
8	Hā	ḥ	8	
9	Tā	t	9	
10	Yā	y, ī	10	
11	Kāf (Gāf)	k (g)	20 (20)	Persian letter
12	Lām	l	30	
13	Mīm	m	40	
14	Nūn	n	50	
15	Sīn	s	60	
16	Āin	‘	70	
17	Fā	f	80	
18	Sād	s	90	
19	Qāf	q	100	
20	Rā	r	200	
21	Shīn	sh	300	
22	Tā	t	400	
23	Thā	th	500	
24	Khā	kh	600	
25	Dhāl	dh	700	
26	Dād	d	800	
27	Zā	z	900	
28	Ghain	gh	1000	

**Note :** After the advent of Islam in Iran, Persian language which was being written in Pahlawī characters adopted Arabic alphabets with addition of a few signs, to accomodate Persian consonants e.g. *Pe, Che, Zhe, and Gāf.*

### **Definition of Chronogram**

Chronogram, in its literary meaning, is a set of letters, a meaningful word, a phrase or a hemistich which yields a particular number if the numerical value assigned to each letter, used in it, is added together. This number denotes the year of the event otherwise mentioned in the chronogrammatic phrase. The date is generally of the Islamic calendar which is also called Hijri Era (i.e.A.H.)

Chronograms are generally composed to commemorate birth or death of a person, accession or deposition of a ruler, victory or defeat in a battle, construction of religious and secular buildings, completion of a book, etc. The practice of giving the child a chronogrammatic name is also found in medieval days. In some cases the titles of the kings or nobles were also framed in such a way that they yielded the date of the coronation or that of the appointment in their career. Sometimes the title of a book or poetic collection was so composed that it yielded the year of completion of the work.

The most remarkable factor involved in composing a chronogram is selection of appropriate words containing only such letters which should refer in its superficial meaning, not only to the event which is being recorded but also yield a specific number to corroborate the date (year) of the event. Besides prose when any chronogram is composed in poetry it becomes still more difficult to be handled as in such a case the metre of the verse too remains an important condition to be fulfilled.

In the literary works we get examples of chronograms composed with the help of Abjad System, by the poets of 12th century A.D. onwards.

The earliest chronogram so far recorded in the history of Persian literature is composed by a Persian poet 'Alī Khaqāni (d.1198 A.D.).

In Indian sub-continent when Muslim rule was established in 13th century the art of composing chronograms got an

unprecedented attention and thus reached new heights with several experiments and innovations. The court poets and free lance composers were to compose a chronogram to record every significant occasion or event of the life. In this way the literature of that period got enriched with valuable treasure of chronograms. Some of them are being highlighted here as a cross-section.

Sher Shāh Sūrī, the wilful Paṭhān king, who forced Mughal Emperor Humāyūn to leave India thus vacating throne for him, died while conquering Kalinjar Fort succumbing to the burn injuries after a fire broke in his ammunition depot. Some poet composed the verses of obituary notice as follows:

*Sher Shāh ānke az šalābat-i-ū ——— Sher-o-buz āb rā baham mīkhurd Chūnke raft āz jahān ba dār-i-baqā — Yāft tārikh-i-ū “za ātish murd”*

The beauty of this chronogrammatic phrase ‘za ātish murd’ (i.e. died of fire) is that it speaks of the cause of death besides skilfully recording the date (A.H.) 952 (1545 A.D.).

Emperor Humāyūn died after falling from the gallery of Sher Mandal being his study in Purānā Qila. A poet composed the picturesque chronogram in a hemistich, saying :

‘Humāyūn Bādshāh az bām uffād’ (i.e. King Humāyūn fell-down from the terrace). This beautifully composed chronogram yields (A.H.) 963 (1556 A.D.) the date of Humāyūn’s demise and also tells the way his death took place.

When Tīpū Sultān of Mysore, famous for his sword fell down at the hands of British force somebody composed ‘shamshūr gum shud’ (i.e. The sword lost) as the chronogram which gives (A.H.) 1214 (1799 A.D.) as the date of martyrdom of Tīpū Sultān.

When Emperor Akbar conquered the fort of Asir from Fārūqi king of Būrhanpur, his court poet, calligrapher and historian Ma’sūm Nāmī Bhakkarī, who witnessed the event, instantly recorded the victory in an epigraph on the wall of the great mosque in the hill-fort forming this chronogram :

*Chū Nāmī talab kard tārikh-i-fath  
Khirad guft “bagrifa kūh-i-Asīr”*

‘ba-grifa kūh-i-Asīr’ (i.e. He (Akbar) captured the hill of Asīr). This self explanatory phrase yields (A.H.) 1009 (1601 A.D.), the date of the fall of Asir Fort. Another phrase from an inscription on a rock at the same place reads :

'*dād-i-ilāh*' (i.e. gift of God) yielding 46 the Ilahi year corresponding to the earlier date. Here the exploitation of the word '*ilāh*' for the Ilāhi era is worth appreciating. Emperor Akbar had to immediately leave for Lahore after the victory at Asir Fort. Nāmī recorded it too saying:

*Fath Dāndes-o-Dakan chūn kard Shāh — 'Āzim-i-Hindust*  
*filfaur shud Yak 'adad Nāmī fazūd ān gāh guft — "Shāh-i-w*  
*'Āzim-i-Lāhore shud"*

The entire last hemistich '*Shāh-i-wālā 'āzim-i-Lāhore shud*' speaks that the great king started for Lahore, yielding (A.E. 1009 i.e. the date of that event.

### Other Systems

Apart from the Abjad System there are three more systems prevalent in the *ḥisā-āl-Jamal*. For two of them the arrangement of the alphabet is the same as that of Abjad System, but the numerical value given to each letter is different.

1. *Jamal-i-Akbar* : In this system the full name of each character is written and then each letter within the name is counted as per its value in Abjad system and they are added up. e.g., The first character 'Alif' is written as per its spellings and in it alif, lām and fā are counted to the total of 111.

2. *Bayyināt* : In this system for Alif only lām and fā are counted leaving first letter alif apart, to make it 110.

Malik-ush-Shura Faīdī, the court poet, of Emperor Akbar very skilfully compared 'Akbar' to 'Sun'. He says :

*Nūre ke za mihr-i-'ālam-ārā paidāst — Az jiba-i-Shāhinshāh*  
*wālā paidāst "Akbar" ke za "āftāb" nisbat dārad — Īn nukta*  
*bayyināt asmā paidāst*

(The light which comes from the world adorning Sun is also emerging out from the forehead of the exalted emperor. The point that 'Akbar' may be compared to the 'sun' is corroborated by the Bayyināt System.)

Here the interesting point is that the value of the word 'Akbar' in terms of Abjad System is 223, and that of 'āftāb' is also 223 as per Bayyināt system.

3. *Zar* : When other systems of composing chronograms are being discussed here it would not be out of place to mention an entirely new system invented by Tāj al-Mulk Sultān nearly two centuries ago. In this system wh

is called 'zar' as well as 'Abtath', the alphabet are in the sequence which is prevalent in the modern Arabic, Persian and Urdu i.e.

*Alif, Bā, Tā, Thā, Jim, Hā, Khā, Dāl, Dhāl, Rā, Zā, Sīn, Shīn, Sād, Dād, Tā, Zā, 'Ain, Ghain, Fā, Qāf, Kāf, Lām, Mīm, Nūn, Wāw, Hā, Yā*

They are given numerical values from 1-1000 in the order of their sequence. The use of this system was limited only to the literature and epigraphs of erstwhile, Mysore State of Tipu Sultān. The example of this system can be seen in the epigraph of Sultān Mahal at Bangalore which says :

*Justam az khidr 'aql 'tārikhash  
Guft lāraib "Rashk-i-jannat shud"*

(The wisdom asked the date from Khidr (the guiding soul).  
He told 'Envy of paradise' undoubtedly, 'rashk-i-jannat shud' yields (A.H.) 1206 (1791-92 A.D.) if worked out according to the Zar system.

# References to Kahavaṇa in Early Historic Inscriptions of Śrī Lāṅka

*Piyatissa Senanayake*

THE ECONOMIC history of ancient Śrī Lāṅka, since the time of the colonial historians, has been viewed mainly through literary sources and such studies utilized inscriptional sources in a limited scale. Until recent times the use of numismatic evidence and associated archaeological data was not seriously considered in the research agenda. The pioneering works, of John Still (1907), Codrington (1924), Hettiarachchi and Caldera (1959) Sirisoma and Amarasinghe (1986) are catalogues by nature and not probes into the economic history of this country based on numismatic evidence. In view of this, we have attempted to probe into the information available from the references to coined money, in Early and Middle Historic inscriptions of Śrī Lāṅka in situating references within a socio-economic context. This study also draws its material evidence from excavated and other archaeological material retrieved to date. The chronological context of the inscriptions in this study fall within a time framework of 3rd century B.C. to 7th century A.D.

It must, however, be emphasised that the non-occurrence of inscriptions in particular regions is not an indication to the flow of currency in that part of the island. This is clearly seen by comparing the two maps where coin finds have been reported from areas that do not contain inscriptions referring to the use of coins. Similarly, the literary sources refer to areas where coins were in use. There is little archaeological or numismatic evidence to corroborate this. Similarly planned out research explorations leading to new discoveries of ancient coin finds and hitherto unknown inscription bearing sites is another limitation in giving a complete picture on the use of money in antiquity. Further to this the discovery of a major portion of coins from a stratified context took place only during the period following

the last decade. Some of these coin finds have not been properly analysed or identified and therefore could not be used in this study.

Period	No. of Inscriptions
3rd century B.C.	02
1st century B.C.	01
1st century A.D.	03
1st - 2nd century A.D.	01
2nd century A.D.	17
3rd century A.D.	04
4th century A.D.	18
5th century A.D.	09
5th - 6th century A.D.	11
6th - 7th century A.D.	17

The 2nd century B.C. inscriptions of Śrī Laṅka mention the term *kahavaṇa* and *kaśapaṇa* (Paranavitana 1970;60) and it is suggested that these coins refer to the coin denomination known as *kahāpaṇa* in the Pāli texts and as *kārshāpaṇa* in the Sanskrit texts. Several variations of the above terms are found in the inscriptions of Śrī Laṅka as *kahāvaṇa*, *kahāpaṇa*, *kahavaṇa*, *kahavaṇi*, *kahivaṇa*, *kavahaṇa*, *kavaṇa* and *kahaṇa*. It is significant that the terms *kāhāṇa* and *kāhaṇa* are also found in the historic inscriptions of India.

Several scholars who have attempted to interpret the term *kahavaṇa* are in agreement that the Pāli *kahāpaṇa*, Sanskrit *kārshāpaṇa* and Prākṛit *kāhāpaṇa* or *kāhāvana* refer to the same coin denomination.<sup>1</sup> *Kārshāpaṇa* > *karshāpaṇa* is formed of *karsha* + *paṇa*; *Karsh* may be a derivative of the root *krish* or 'to plough'. A unit of weight may have been associated with a particular quantity of grain in the remote past. Subsequently this may have been extended to a unit of weight associated with a regular standard medium of exchange i.e. metallic unit or coin during the Early Historic Period. In fact Sircar points out that *karsha* referred to a 'name of a weight equal to 80 *raties* and *tōla*, sometimes regarded as 100 or 120 *raties* in weight' (1966:149). Though *paṇa* may refer to trade (*paṇi* > traders in the Vedic texts), Sircar believes that *paṇa* refers to the silver *kārshāpaṇa* in the historical sources. The term *kāṇam* is found in the Tamil inscriptions referring to gold coins.

The term *huna-kavaṇa* found in a 6th-7th century A.D. inscription from the Barrow's pavilion at Anurādhapura is said to mean *huna-kahavaṇa*. According to Codrington, this was the same as *sonṇa-kahāpaṇa* which is the largest denomination of the gold coins consisting of 8 *aka*. It is significant that the term *huna* never occurs in any pre- 6th century A.D. inscription. On the strength of this, Codrington assigns a post- 6th century A.D. date for the gold coin consisting of 8 *aka*.

Inscriptions belonging to the post-6th century A.D., refer to two other types of coins as *mala-kahavaṇa* and *dama-kahavaṇa*. Codrington associates these coins with the *drachma* as the 'rope' or 'wreath' may have been represented in these coins. Paranavitana also considers the *mala-kahavaṇa* to be associated with the kingdom of the Malaya Peninsula. It is, however, felt that these two terms require further investigation prior to drawing any firm conclusions about their nature and identity.

The inscriptions of Śrī Laṅka also refer to another coin named *māsaka* or *masaka*, which is known to the Pāli sources as *māsaka* and as *māsha* to the Sanskrit sources. It is suggested that this may have been a silver or gold coin. Paranavitana has suggested that the *māsaka* of Śrī Laṅka was 1/20 of the *kahavaṇa*.

In addition to direct references to coined money, some inscriptions also carry notices on payments made in money. For instance, a 2nd century B.C. inscription from Dambulla records an endowment of fifty pieces or *satada dhana*. The type of coin is not specified. A record of 1st century A.D., from Ganekanda records the amount spent on the construction of a village dam as nine hundred thousand. The Veheragala inscription of Sabha 60-67 A.D., mentions five hundred each as the amount spent on the procurement and the deepening of a reservoir named Upaladonika. The 6th century Nilagama inscription records 100 x 8 as amounts given to redeem eight slaves. Though such inscriptions do not mention any specific coin type, we may firmly assume that such notices refer to coined money.

The Mampita - vihāra inscription of 2nd century B.C., is the earliest inscriptional reference to *kahavaṇa* from Śrī Laṅka. The Citadel excavation of Anurādhapura clearly establishes the occurrence of terracotta coin moulds, used in the production of punch-marked coins, from layer (4a) which is dated to 200 B.C. Paranavitana also draws our attention to certain terms found in the early Brāhmī inscriptions, that may have a bearing on coin dealing. For instance, he is of the view that the term *rupadaka* found in the Periyakāḍu-vihāra inscription derives from *Skt.*, *rūpyādhyaksha* or 'superintendent of the mint'. However, his derivation of the term *rūpavāpara* in a 1st century A.D. inscription at Kaduruwewa, from *rūpyavyāpāra* or 'dealer in coined money' (*ibid* No.1205) is not acceptable due to a faulty reading. Our reading of the estampage clearly shows that this term could be read as *dorakaṇikaha vāpara* and not as *dorakaṇi rūpavāpara*. A record of 1st century B.C. or A.D. from Handagala records the term *paṇadaka* (< *panyādhyaksha*). Paranavitana interprets this as 'the superintendent of merchandise'. This may be questioned. *Paṇa* may well imply copper *kārshāpaṇa* and *paṇadaka* may mean a "superintendent of the mint for copper coins."

A higher frequency of the term *kahavaṇa/kahapaṇa* in the inscriptions of the early Christian era is a clear indication to a wider use of coined money. For instance, we may cite some details from an inscription at Sinadiyagala which gives details about the capital and cash shares spent on a particular Buddhist monastery.

Table 2

Amount	Purpose
125,000 <i>kahapaṇa</i>	Construction of <i>uposatha</i> house
5,000 <i>kahapaṇa</i>	For the use of carpets
	Purchased reservoir
200 <i>māsaka</i>	Water rent to be paid by fifty families

The earliest reference to *kahāpaṇa* in the *Mahāvamsa* is associated with an incident dating back to 2nd century B.C. where king Elāra is said to have donated 15,000 *kahāpaṇa* to construct a *stūpa* at Chētiyapabbata. Several references to *kahāpaṇa* are also found in association with the life story of Duṭṭhagāmaṇī. Codrington has prepared an exhaustive list of

such literary references to *kahāpaṇa* from Śrī Laṅka sources. It is unfortunate that scholars such as Codrington or Rhys-Davids did not pay sufficient attention to the commentaries as sources for such information on the early coined money of this country.

In view of Śrī Laṅka's trans-oceanic trade based on luxury products and other strategic resources, coined money brought in through such trade mechanisms during the Early Historic period may prove to be a strong corroborative source for dating the local coins found within an archaeological context and also as a source for the study of the money vortex of that time.

It is generally believed that the ancient civilization of Śrī Laṅka was primarily based in the 'Dry Zone'. Contrary to this, inscriptions bearing notices on early coined money, punch marked coins and local coins falling within the period under discussion spread well outside the confines of the dry zone and extend to the montane region as well. A parallel situation is seen in association with the distribution pattern of Roman coins from 1st to 5th century A.D., where such finds are spread into the wet zone and the montane zone of this island.

This situation is quite clearly related to the movement of strategic resources from the wet montane zone to the low land regions, a process that has an antiquity dating back to the proto-historic period. Recent studies have suggested that such resource requirements conditioned the community movement towards the central hills of Śrī Laṅka. Exchange route networks and economic interactions were already in existence when coined money entered such regions. It is significant that the earliest reference to *kahāpaṇa* in the 2nd century B.C. comes from a record at Mampita-vihāra in the lower montane region in the wet zone. In addition to several punch-marked coins found in the wet zone, the largest hoard of punch-marked coins was also found in the heart of the wet zone at Minuvangoda. Recent studies on the middle and the upper valleys of the Mahaoya very clearly indicates the development of production and distribution centres and the Mampita-vihāra inscription is located within such a context. Similarly, the Ganekanda-vihāra inscription (B.C./A.D. 1st century) recording the investment of a large quantity of cash on an irrigation system, is situated near an entry point to the hills. It is suggested that such entry points

i.e. *kaḍa*, transferring strategic resources from one eco-system to another, housed affluent socio-economic groups who could afford such cash investments. It is in the above context that one may note the occurrence of punch-marked coins, other local copper coins and Roman coins in the wetland plains and in the montane zone.

It is, therefore, not surprising that we come across a variety of ways in which coined money is referred to in the textual and inscriptional sources, ranging from donations, investments to taxes. The 2nd century B.C. inscription at Mampita- vihāra is in a damaged state and is not clear as to the purpose for which the *kahavaṇa* were spent. An early Brāhmī inscription from Dambulla mentions an endowment of 'half a hundred' or '*satada-dhana*'. The endowment was made by a *śamaṇi*. An inscription from Ganekanda-vihaṇa dated c.1st century B.C. or A.D mentions the amount paid for labour in the construction of a dam. In fact the *Mahāvamśa* records cash payments for labour in the narrations associated with Duṭṭhagāmiṇi and Mahādhūlimahātissa. The 1st century A.D. inscription at Vihāragala records that 500 was spent to purchase a reservoir in addition to another 500 spent for the silt to be removed, the latter being a clear reference to the amount paid for labour. The amount of hundred thousand and quarter of *kahāpaṇa* spent on *upōsathaghara* by king Vasabha 67-111 A.D. obviously, implies the payments to material and labour utilized in the building of that structure. It is precisely during the same period that we come across inscriptions referring to taxes collected in cash. For example, the Situlpavuwa inscription of Gajabāhu records the donation of two *kahavaṇa* collected daily from the court house for medicinal expenses of the monks at the Cittapabbata monastery. The Sinadiyagala inscription of Vasabha, clearly records 200 *māsaka* as the water tax charged from the peasants. Literary sources such as the *Sīhaḷavattthuppakaraṇa* carry several references as to how various individuals utilized *kahāpaṇa*. According to these notices some purchased land, some sold personal items, some purchased food items and some others obtained cash payments in lieu of labour.

One of the most interesting aspects associated with coined money in ancient Śrī Lāṅka was the implication it had on the Buddhist establishment of that time. In Śrī Lāṅka the use of coined money was definitely not restricted to the lay society alone. Ideally though monks were expected to refrain from handling precious metals and coined money, the realities of economic interactions in an urban society created the necessity of utilizing coined money in the procurement of essential items. This became a hard reality especially to those monks who had to fend for themselves, especially during famines and other calamities, or even living away from the more affluent monasteries that were well endowed by patronage. This contradiction between the ideal and the practical reality surfaced in less than a hundred years after the departure of the Buddha, when the issue of utilizing precious metals and money was debated at the Second Council. The development of monastic landlordism during the Middle Historic Period is viewed as an in-built system safeguarding a dependent community in society.

It is interesting to note that as early as the 1st century B.C., the Buddhist clergy possessed money enabling them to make private donations. The Dambulla inscription datable to 1st Century B.C. recording such a donation made by a *śamāṇi* is a case in point. A donation of 40 *kahapaṇas* by a monk is found in a first century A.D. inscription. As time went on, the concentration of wealth in the hands of the monks seems to have increased. A 3rd century A.D. inscription from Murutange records the donation of 300 *dama-kahavaṇa* by a Buddhist monk for the construction of a flight of steps. By the 4th - 5th century A.D. there are clear references, from Hinguregala inscription, to the *sagasata kahavaṇa* or the 'kahavaṇa of the *saṅgha*' and the manner in which that money was utilized to purchase land.

It is quite likely that the initial accumulation of such coined money took place through cash donations made towards the monastic establishments. For instance, a 2nd century A.D. inscription from Ganekanda records a donation of 200 *māsakas* by a layman to a *chētiya* (Paravavitana, 1983 No.77). Such donations along with the donation of 40 *kahāpaṇa* made to the

*stūpa* by a *śamaṇi* clearly implies that cash was deposited in favour of the monastery enabling the procurement of necessary items required for religious observances associated with the *stūpa*. A direct cash donation (of *kahapaṇa*) to the *saṅgha* is found in an inscription datable to 2nd century A.D. at Situlpavuva. The donation was made to the monks in general and not to any individual monk. From a slightly later context, the Jētavana tablet inscription mentions a donation of 100 *kahavaṇas* donated to the monks by two merchants. It is precisely cash accumulated through such donations that may have resulted in the development of standing funds such as *sagasata kahavaṇa* with the monastic establishments.

During the Middle Historic Period the utilization of coined money by the monks took place through other agencies as well. The earliest hint at this is seen in a 4th century A.D. inscription from Tonigala. Here the deposit was made in the form of grain and the interest was also derived in the form of grain and was given to the monks. By the 5th century A.D., we hear of 100 *kahāpaṇas* being deposited with a particular establishment called *mahatabaka niyamātana* and the cash interest given to the monastery to conduct a particular ritual ceremony called the *ariyavasavāṭa*. It is now suggested that the establishment known as *Mahatabaka* may have been a major copper working guild, which was obviously involved in commercial operations as well. The above inscription located at the Kabuatabendigala and several other inscriptions belonging to the same period found at Situlpavuva, Kongala, Kotaveheragala, record *kahavaṇa* deposits and the donation of cash interest to the monasteries.

It is also interesting to note that out of 39 inscriptions carrying notices on coined money from 5th to 7th century A.D., 22 of them record that the interest money was utilized for the *ariyavasa vāṭa koṭu* and *vaharala vāṭa koṭu*. It is possible that the former may refer to the *Āriyavaṃsa* ceremony and the latter to the releasing of slaves. The exact meanings of these terms are debated. Yet, what is clear is that these functions did bring in a regular flow of cash to the monasteries, which ultimately linked the monastic economic operations to the existing cash nexus.

In conclusion we may note the following aspects. The epigraphical sources corroborated by numismatic, archaeological and textual sources establish that the use of coined money gained usage around 3rd or 2nd century B.C. It was not restricted to a particular geographical zone but spread out in relation to exchange routes, resource locations and production-distribution centres. While the *kahāpaṇa* had a primary position, smaller and other varieties and denominations of coins were in use during the period under discussion.

The use of coined money spread not only in various physical zones, but it also cut across various social and economic groups including the incorporation of the monastic establishments into the cash nexus of that time.

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## Three Inscriptions Referring to Śaṅkarasa

S. Nagarjuna

TWO INSCRIPTIONS from Kurumiddi<sup>1</sup>, Kalwakurti Taluk and one from Rāmājipalle<sup>2</sup>, Achchampet Taluk of Mahabubnagar District from Andhra Pradesh were copied by me during the village to village survey of the above Taluks in the years 1992-93 and 1993-94 and reported from the Southern Zone Office of the Epigraphy Branch, Chennai. Since they are important from the point of view of political history they are taken up here for study with the kind permission of the Director (Epigraphy), Mysore.<sup>3</sup>

All the three inscriptions are in Kannaḍa script and language and belongs to the reign of Trailōkyamalladēva i.e., Sōmēśvara I (1042-68 A.D.). Of the two inscriptions engraved on a stone pillar lying in a field in the village, the first one, dated in Śaka 968, Vyaya, Vaiśākha śu 1, Wednesday Solar eclipse = 1046 A.D. April 9, records the gift of the village Kurumudde *agrahāra* situated in Kōlūru-300 to *maneverggade* Kūchimayya by *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Bijjarasa, *Yuvarāja* Śaṅkarasa and *Kumāra* Ānemaraśa on their return journey from a camp (*payana-vīḍu*) after releasing the fort of Pannāla.

While the second epigraph on the same pillar is dated in Śaka 970 Sarvadhāri, Vaiśākha Akshaya 3, Tuesday = 1048 A.D. April 19 records the confirmation of the above gift of Kurumudde including all tax and also further a gift of 80 *gadyāṇas* by *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Śaṅkarasa who was camping at the *agrahāra* Mārānde situated in Mantaniya-nāḍu on his return after the capture of Chakrakūṭa. It also records another grant after a month in the same cyclic year, of 200 *mattars* of land measured by *rājamāna* to one Nāmayya by *manevarggade* Muddemayya when the victorious army crossed Kōṇana-Khaṇḍi.

The third inscription from Rāmājipalli dated in Śaka 971 Virōdhi, Bhādrapada ba 12, Sunday = 1049 A.D., August 27 records the grant of 12 *mattars* of land on the banks of the Rāmēśvara-tīrtha for the maintenance and food offerings to the ascetics and brāhmaṇas while Śaṅkaragaṇḍarasa, the feudatory of the king was encamping (*payanaṇvīḍinōl*) at the village Kiriya-Kaṇḍūru-nāḍu.

It may be seen from the above three inscriptions dated in Śaka 968, 970 and 971, that there was a military campaign by a section of the Chālukyan army. In the first instance in Śaka 968 (1046 A.D.) it was spear-headed by *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Bijjarasa, *Yuvarāja* Śaṅkarasa and *Kumāra* Ānemarasa. It further refers to the release of the fort of Pannāla and their camp on their way back.

While in the second instance of Śaka 970 (1048 A.D.), the inscription solely refers to Śaṅkarasa as the head of the section of the army of Chakrakūṭa campaign (named Chakrakūṭa *daṇḍuge*) and as camping at the *agrahāra* Mārānde in the Mantaniya-nāḍu. He is described as *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* with a series of titles such as *Chalukya-kula-kumuda-chandram Chakrakūṭa-Dhārāvarshapura-dahana-śaṅkaram*. In the same year (1048 A.D. May 25), his victorious army was shown as progressing after crossing Kōṇana-Khaṇḍi.

In the third inscription instance dated Śaka 971 (1049 A.D.) Śaṅkarasa inscriptions referred to with a varied name as Śaṅkaragaṇḍarasa with the epithet *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* under Sōmēśvara I and bearing the similar titles as mentioned in the above inscription and stated to have encamped at a village Kiriya-Kaṇḍūru.

It is interesting to note that in 1046 A.D. Śaṅkarasa was referred to as a *Yuvarāja* and mentioned as one of the military chiefs, while in the inscriptions of 1048 and 1049 A.D., he was not referred to as *Yuvarāja* but as a feudatory chief i.e., *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* with full fledged titles showing his independent and enhanced status of a military head.

The reference in the inscription of 1046, about the release of the fort of Pannāla, and in the inscriptions of 1048 and 1049 A.D. revealing the event of burning the city named Chakrakūṭa-Dhārāvarshapura shows that

Śaṅkarasa not only participated in the battle at Pannāla in the initial instance but also played an important role of a general heading a section of the Chalukyan army Chakrakūṭa-daṇḍu in the northern expedition of capturing the fortress<sup>4</sup> of Chakrakūṭa-Dhārāvarshapura and burning the same. Chakrakūṭa which is in the modern Bastar District<sup>5</sup> of Madhya Pradesh was known to have been a capital of the Nāgavaṁśī ruler named Dhārāvarsha who was started to have been uprooted by the famous general Nāgavarma of Sōmēśvara and who was given the titles like *Chakrakūṭa-Kālakūṭa* and *Dhārā-varsha-darpōtpātana* in the inscription from Nanded dated Śaka 969 (1047 A.D. April 1).<sup>6</sup>

The present inscriptions of Śaṅkarasa dated 1048 and 1049 A.D. must have been referring to the same northern expedition viz., the capture and burning of Chakrakūṭa-Dhārāvarshapura which was corroborated by the above Nanded inscription dated an year earlier. It is to be noted here that the word Chakrakūṭa-Dhārāvarshapura means that Chakrakūṭa was the city of king Dhārāvarsha of the Nāgavaṁśī family and that it does not have any connection with the Dhārā, the capital of the Paramāras or any Chālukyan fight with the Paramāras. The event of capture and burning of the Chakrakūṭa Dhārāvarshapura must have taken place between 1046 A.D. April 9 and 1047 A.D. April 1 of Nanded inscription. As in the former date Śaṅkarasa bore the title of *Yuvarāja* and had no epithets related to the above military event, *Chakrakūṭa-Kālakūṭa* and *dhārāvarshadarpōtpātana*. In the subsequent years 1048 and 1049 A.D. Śaṅkarasa was also attributed with full fledged titles referring to the above event with an emphasis that he has been leading the section of the army exclusively assigned to capture the Chakrakūṭa fort as expressed in the words '*Chakrakūṭa-daṇḍu-āluttire*' and of the burning of the city was solely attributed to him poetically with an expression '*Chakrakūṭa Dhārāvarshapura-dahana-śaṅkaram*'.

It may be observed that *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Śaṅkarasa of the above three inscriptions was assigned the important role heading a section of the army not only because of his valour and capacity but also because of his being related to the king by belonging to the Chālukyan family as revealed by his epithet

'Chālukya-kula-kumuda-chandram'. Though the inscriptions do not say in what way he was related to the king in the Chālukyan family, the epithets borne by him in appreciation of his achievements within a short span shows his proximity to the king and his importance in the Chālukyan family.

### Notes and References

1. *A.R.Ep.*, 1992-93, Nos.B.31-32.
2. *Ibid.*, 1993-94.
3. I am thankful to Sri M.J.Sharma, Deputy Superintending Epigraphist, A.S.I., Southern Zone, Chennai for his encouragement and suggestions.
4. *Fleet Dynasties of Kanarese Districts*, p.442.
5. G.Yazdani, *Early History of the Deccan*, p.332.
6. V.Venkatarayan's Index of the unpublished Chālukya inscriptions of the Hyderabad Museum. .

## Mūḷikkāḷa-kachcham - A Study

N. Pankaja

TIRUMŪLIKKĀḶAM is one of the 13 *Malai-nāṭṭu tirupatis* and Vaishṇavite centres sung by Nammāḷvār, in his *Tiruvāymoli* and Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār in his *Periya Tirumoli*. From the descriptions given in the hymns, we come to know that Mūḷikkāḷam was an established town encircled by fortification, fertile lands and army cantament. The deity of the temple has been described as a lamp of Mūḷikkāḷam.

The Chēra influence over the Mūshika country is confirmed by the reference to Mūḷikkāḷam in the inscriptions of 10th and 11th centuries A.D. Mūḷikkāḷam had flourished as an important Śālai consisting of various disciplines of study. It had distinguished bodies like *ūr* and *Poduvāls*. The elderly members of the *Sabhā* used to meet at Tirumūḷikkāḷam to take decisions and to arrive at agreements. They are variously called Mūḷikkāḷa-Vyavastai, Mūḷikkāḷa-kachcham, Mūḷikkāḷa-Oḷukkam, etc. The main intention of the body is to frame the rules and regulations to be followed by the public.

The first reference to the meeting of the *ūraṛ* and *Poduvāl* comes from an inscription of Bhāskara Ravivarman dated in his 49th regnal year (i.e., 977 A.D.). In this inscription, Manukulāditya is said to have made provisions for the feeding of Brāhmaṇas. *Mūḷikkāḷa-kachcham* means the decree of *vyavasthai* or agreement arrived at Mūḷikkāḷam.

This Mūḷikkāḷa-kachcham has become a precedent to be followed by the laymen in all parts of Kēraḷa starting from Kanyākumāri to Gōkarṇam irrespective of caste, creed or religion. Since Bhāskara Ravivarman was a powerful king of Vēṇāḍu, the rules and regulations governing this entire *śālai* framed during his reign, were followed not only by him and his successors but also by other dynasties who ruled over Kēraḷa during 10th-11th century A.D.

Normally in the inscriptions of Tamil Nāḍu and Kēraḷa we come across the imprecatory portions with expressions like

*Gaṅgaik-karaiyil kārām paśuvaik-konṛa pāvattiṛku āḷ=āguga.*

This is to instil in the layman an awareness about the importance and sanctity and the maintenance of the records through the ages. But in Bhāskara Ravivarman's time, this powerful agreement Mūlikkaḷa-kachcham also came to be viewed as part of the *pañcha-mahāpātakas* adumbrated in the imprecatory part of the epigraphs.

In the Huzur office plates of Bhāskara Ravivarman, belonging to Tiruvalla, one of 13 Divyadēśams of Malai-nāḍu, there is a reference to Mūlikkaḷa-kachcham as part of the imprecatory verse, i.e., any person transgressing or violating these rules, will incur the sin and is subject to severe punishments.

In another *malai-nāḍu* Tirupāṭi, the Vaishṇavite temple at Tirukkākarai, during the 31st regnal year of Bhāskara Ravivarman, it is stated that any one who acted contrary to his order should be punished by the assembly of Mūlikkaḷam.

The inscriptions of Tiruvaṇṇaḍūr, one of the centres of Śrīvaishṇavas in Malai-nāḍu, recording the gift of lands by Śrīvallvaṅkōdai, governor of Vēnāḍu, to this temple, states that all those who do harm to the charity would be subjected to Mūlikkaḷa-kachcham.

This *kachcham* is not only followed by Vaishṇavite centres but also by Śaivite and Jaina centres also. An inscription from the Bhagavatī temple at Kumāranallūr, in Ettimanur taluk in Kottayam Division, states that, the persons who have transgressed the rules and regulations made in this record, should suffer social ostracism and further be regarded as coming under the class of persons who have offended the good men belonging to the *olukkani* of Mūlikkaḷam and liable for punishment. This *kachcham* has become the base of subsequent *kachcham*.

The inscription in the rock-cut cave temple at Tirunandīkarai, a Jaina centre in the Kalkulam taluk, of Kanyakumari district, register the gift of lands and mentions that those who obstruct the expenses shall be subject to the punishment of Mūlikkaḷam.

In course of time, after the period of Indukōḍaivarman, the term was never used in later inscriptions for which the reasons are not known.

## Tekkali Stone Inscription of Kapilēśvaradēva, Aṅka 28

Subrata Kumar Acharya

THE INSCRIPTION edited here was copied by D.C.Sircar in 1953-54 and was noticed in *Annual Report Indian Epigraphy* 1953-54 as No.B 92.<sup>1</sup> The estampage of the inscription is now preserved in the Office of the Director (Epigraphy), Mysore. The inscription was discovered from Tekkali in the Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh and was in possession of the Junior Raja Saheb of Tekkali when Sircar copied it. It is damaged and fragmentary, and has at least six lines of writing.

The epigraph is written in early Oriya script of the 15th century and can be compared with the other Oriya inscriptions of Gajapati king Kapilēndradēva (1435-66 A.D.) The language is Oriya and the text is in prose. The inscription is dated in the 28th *aṅka* year (corresponding to 1456-57 A.D.) of the Sūryavaṁśi Gajapati ruler Kapilēndradēva.<sup>2</sup> It further refers to *aṣṭamī* or the eighth *tithi* (day) of a month. The other details about the date as well as the purport of the grant are lost.

### Text<sup>3</sup>

- 1 [Vī]ra Śrī [Gajapati Gau-]
- 2 ḍēsura paratāpa Kapīlē
- 3 suradēva mahārājāṅka-
- 4 ra vīje rāje [sama-]
- 5 sta 28 ṅka śrāhī .....
- 6 ..... aṣṭamī .....

### Translation

In the eighth (day) of the 28th *aṅka* year of the victorious reign of king Śrī Gajapati Gauḍēśvara Pratāpa Kapilēśvaradēva.

## Notes and References

1. I am thankful to the Director (Epigraphy) for kindly permitting me to edit this inscription.
2. There is yet another inscription of the *anika* 28 of Kapilēndra Gajapati on the south wall of the *maṇḍapa* in front of the Ālyār shrine in the Lakshmi-Narasimhasvāmi temple at Sinhāchalam. *S.I.I.*, Vol.VI, No.1151.
3. From the estampage. .

# New Inscriptions from Neriñjikuḍi

C. Santhalingam

PUDUKKOTTAI District in Tamilnadu State remains an area of rich potentiality for the students of history. Hundreds of villages in this district have been explored by the pioneers and a lot of materials are available now for our further study. More than one thousand inscriptions have been published in one volume by the then Pudukkottai State Administration. But still frequent discoveries are being brought to light from this area. Recently a team led by Mr. Iravatham Mahadevan has discovered a valuable Brāhmī inscription dated to 2nd century A.D. on a Jain rock cut bed at Kuḍumiyāmalai. In our recent visit to the village Neriñjikuḍi we came across two new inscriptions which throw considerable light on the social and religious life of this area. This paper contains discussion on the significance of these new inscriptions.

Neriñjikuḍi is a small village, situated in the midway of Pudukkottai to Ponnāmarāvati main road. This village has been already visited by epigraphists and four early Chōla inscriptions have been published in Pudukkottai inscriptions volume.<sup>2</sup> Among these four inscriptions one has been copied from Udayamārttāṇḍa Īśvara temple, the other three from the slabs found in the lake of the village Neriñjikuḍi. But why and how the rest of the inscriptions of this temple were left unnoticed is not known. Our thanks are due to the constant efforts of Mr. Karu Rajendran, a retired teacher who had helped us in copying and reading the inscriptions.

Among these two, one belong to Rājendra Chōla I and the other to Rājarāja Chōla III. Rājendra's inscription is engraved on the Western and Southern walls of the central shrine of Udayamārttāṇḍa Īśvara. (Śiva temple). It is a lengthy inscription consisting of seventy four lines but still incomplete. In this inscription almost one fourth portion is devoted to the *praśasti* of king Rājendra I and the rest reveals the date and the subject matter.

During the eighth regnal year of Rājendra I, the Ūrār of Neriñjikuḍi donated a large extent of land as tax-free *dēvadāna* to the local Mārttāṇḍa-Īśvara temple. From this *dēvadāna* land, two pieces of land *viz.*, Nakkan-vayakkal and Sirukilavaṇṇa-vayakkal were bought by an individual and donated for the food offerings to Kshētrapālādēvar (Bhairava) shrine which was situated at Tirunalakkuṇṇam (modern Kuḍumiyamālai) a place at 30km. distance from Neriñjikuḍi. The rest of the *dēvadāna* lands were distributed to the temple servants.

Besides these, one *mā* of land was allotted for flower garden. An individual Araiyan Dēvaṇ of Kanakapākkam also has donated some land for one perpetual lamp. One more perpetual lamp was endowed by the Ūrār and a separate land was allotted for its maintenance. An official Parāntakan Ravi *alias* Rājavichchādira Pallavaraiyaṇ, a native of the same village donated some lands for daily food offerings during three *sandhi* pūjas.

It is interesting to note that different names were given to the lands which were newly brought under cultivation. *Vilayaṇ-vayakkal*, *Nakkaṇ vayakkal*, *Sirukilavaṇṇa vayakkal*, *Nārppatteṇṇāyira vayakkal*, *Satti vayakkal*, *Tirukkōṭṭai vayakkal*, etc., are the names given in this inscription. These names reveal the persons, community or villages who caused to reclaim the lands for cultivation. It shows the efforts taken to increase the agricultural activities in this dry area in the later Chōla period.

Another notable point is the land donation for Kshētrapālādēva of Tirunalakkuṇṇam. Tirunalakkuṇṇam (Kuḍumiyāmalai) is a well known historical place famous for its musical inscription and the cave temple is dated to 7-8th century A.D. A structural temple dedicated to Tirunalakkuṇṇam-uḍaiya mahadēva (Śiva) was constructed during 9-10 century A.D. by the feudatories (Irukkuvēl) of early Chōlas. Within this temple precincts a subsidiary shrine for Kshētrapāla might have been erected. For the food offerings of this shrine, some individuals from Neriñjikuḍi have endowed lands. This gives a clue that the Kshētrapāla worship during this period gained momentum.

During the 10-11 century A.D., there was a spurt in the activities of various sects of Śaivism. Rājendra I imported Śaivas from the bank of the Ganges and established them in

various places in the Chōḷa country.<sup>3</sup> Pāśupata, Kālāmukha and Kāpālīka sects emerged with equal force and established their own monasteries and institutions at various centres in South India. Royal patronage was also given to all these sects. Lōkamādēvi, the queen of Rājarāja I personally constructed a separate shrine for Kshētrapāla at Tiruvalaṇḍi near Kumbakōṇam. Rājarāja's two daughters Kundavai, and Mādēvadigal and his son Rājēndra I donated gold liberally for this temple.<sup>4</sup> During Rājēndra I's reign a shrine for Kshētrapāla was constructed at Tīrttamalai Śiva temple in Dharmapuri District.<sup>5</sup> The Neriṇḍikuḍi inscription which is under discussion further prove the influence of Kāpālīka sect in this region and in this particular period. Koḍumbālūr the capital of Irukkuvēl chiefs, the feudatories of early Chōḷa's was an important Kālāmukha centre situated in Pudukkottai area.<sup>6</sup> It is evident that both Kālāmukha and Kāpālīka sects gained equal importance and patronage from the Chōḷa rulers.

The second inscription (new) belongs to the seventeenth regnal year of Rājarāja III (1235 A.D.) It reveals the sale of land to one Araśa Gāmbiraṇ, son of Uchitaṇ, a *marava* of Poṇṇamarāvati.

It is interesting to note that in this inscription there is a reference to the sale of land to a *marava* (a warrior) who in turn donated the same to the temple for the offerings to Gaṇēśa. This suggests that in the social hierarchy the *maravas* were recognised on par with the *vellālas*, etc.

The old name of the land is changed and the new name is given as Uchitaṇ-vayakkal after the *marava* who donated 'he land to the temple. This shows definitely an upward nobility on the part of the *maravas* in the society. Of course other similar instances have to be collated and a proper interpretation has to be made. For example, in Pudukkottai inscriptions a lot of references about *maravas* and their role in public institutions are seen.

Thus, from the above two inscriptions we come to know about the village and the temple of Neriṇḍikuḍi during the Chōḷa period.

### Notes and References

1. The author of this paper and Mr.Karu Rajendran of Melappanaiyur visited this place and copied these inscriptions.
2. *I.P.S.*, No.20, 59, 60 and 72.
3. K.A.N. Sastri, *The Cholas*, p.643.
4. *S.I.I.*, Vol.VIII, Nos.223, 234, 236-237.
5. *Dharmapuri District Inscriptions*, Vol.I, No.54.
6. K.A.N. Sastri, *op.cit.*, p.648.

# Epigraphic References to Horticulture

A. K. Ranade

DECCAN HAS played a significant role in the history of our country, especially the Western coastline and its ports. The Koṅkaṇ, a coastal strip of Maharashtra has always been a profitable asset in the history of Maharashtra.

In this paper an attempt has been made to focus light on the epigraphic references to Horticultural gardens in Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra (North Koṅkaṇ) under the Thāṇe Śilāhāras.

The Rāshtrakūṭas ruled in Maharashtra from about 756 A.D. who earlier were the feudatories of the Chalukyas. Dantidurga was the founder of the new empire of the Rāshtrakūṭas in the Deccan. He was succeeded by Kṛishṇa I, who conquered Koṅkaṇ.

Three distinct families or chiefs or minor princes with the name of Śilāhāra ruled over different parts of Maharashtra. The three Śilāhāra dynasties of *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* or dependent princes were found at the time of Rāshtrakūṭas.<sup>1</sup> They seem to have remained under the tutelage of the Rāshtrakūṭas till about the close of 10th century when Aparājita assumed independent power.<sup>2</sup>

One of these three families were the Śilāhāras of Thāṇe, who ruled over North Koṅkaṇ from about 800 to 1250 A.D., which was composed of 1400 villages.<sup>3</sup> Their capital seems to have been Puri which was a coastal town.<sup>4</sup>

Like other dynasties, Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ made many charity endowments in various forms. Land grants, *dānas* and *dakṣhiṇā* in form of cash and kind were the common pattern of their charity endowments. They also supported their patronage to the construction of temples in various places in their territory. Several stone inscriptions as well as copper plate inscriptions of the Thāṇe Śilāhāras prove this.

For the study of inscriptions referring to horticultural grants, I have taken five inscriptions, viz., (1) Rañjali Stone Inscription

of Śilāhāra Haripāladēva,<sup>5</sup> (2) Mahul (Trombay) Inscription of Śilāhāra Haripāldēva,<sup>6</sup> (3) Murud Jāñjira copper plate Inscription of Śilāhāra Aparājitadēva,<sup>7</sup> (4) Lōnad Inscription of Śilāhāra Aparāditya (II),<sup>8</sup> and (5) Balipattan copper plate of Śilāhāra Raṭṭarāja.<sup>9</sup>

As a matter of fact, inscriptions make scanty references of the common agricultural crops taken in the land. Of course, there is mention of some crops in connection with the land grants. However, there are more references to the horticultural gardens and products in the Marāṭhī inscriptions. Various land grants record the endowment of a garden for a definite purpose. The purpose probably was the *dāna* to a Brāhmaṇa or for other religious purpose. The inscriptions of this period record gifts made by ministers, private individuals or village communities. The mention of charity endowments in the form of horticultural gardens is very interesting one. Some of these endowments are by way of fruit gardens. The Rañjali<sup>10</sup> stone inscription dated Śaka 1070 (1148 A.D.) of the time of Śilāhāra king Haripāladēva records some donations one of which is a *māla* meaning a garden. This inscription is in mixed Sanskrit-Marāṭhī language and Dēvanāgarī script. Rañjali is a village 4 miles south-east of Sōpāra - a flourishing ancient port on the western coast. This inscription records the donation made by a village community. Though it records the donation of a Māla to Sahavasi Viṣṇu Upādhyāya, it is not clear about the nature of the *māla* - it could be a fruit garden or vegetable garden or even a flower garden.

Another inscription<sup>11</sup> of king Haripāladēva dated Śaka 1075 (1153 A.D.) records the endowment of the fruit garden. There is the specific mention of the garden of betelnut - a cash crop since ancient period. It must be a cash crop because this inscription records another garden. Here it is referred to as *vāṭikā* which again means a garden - of Gōvardhana Bhaṭṭopādhyāya which was made tax free - in Dombli which is identified with modern Dombivli near Kalyāṇ junction. This is an interesting inscription for the reason that it mentions 3% tax levied on betelnut garden. That means the betelnut gardens were deliberately planted for commercial purpose as it had the market value. However, what was the nature of another

garden, i.e., Dombili - vātikā is not clear. This bilingual stone inscription written in Sanskrit and Marāṭhī was issued on the occasion of lunar eclipse.

Murud Jāñjira copper plate inscription<sup>12</sup> of Śilāhāra Aparājitadēva dated Śaka 915 - Śrāvaṇa 15th i.e., Sunday 20th August 993 A.D. mentions the fruit garden in Salānaka village of Panad area of Raigad District. This Panad according to S.B.Deo is probably the modern Pen and the Salānaka is probably modern Murud Jāñjira. The inscription is in Sanskrit language and Nāgarī script. The fruit garden was donated to Kolam, who was the son of Haridēva. The kind of fruit crop produced in this garden is not clear. This inscription was issued on the occasion of solar eclipse.

The Lōnad Inscription<sup>13</sup> of the Śilāhāra Aparāditya (II) in Thane district was also issued on the occasion of solar eclipse in Śaka 1104, Kārtika vadi, 15 i.e. Monday, 5th November, 1184 A.D. It records the donation of a vāḍi i.e., garden (in Viharoli village in Shaṭshali-vishaya i.e., Sasti (now in Thane District) to Vyōmēśvaradēva. Here the nature of vāḍi is not clear. It could be a vāḍi for commercial crop or flower or fruit or the garden of mixed plantations.

Another interesting inscription viz., Balipattan copper plate inscription<sup>14</sup> of Śilāhāra Raṭṭarāja of North Konkan records the land grant as well as the donation of a betelnut garden. This donation was made on the occasion of Saṅkrānti i.e., Pausa vadi 1 Śaka 932, Sunday which will correspond to 24th December 1010 A.D.

Here, the donation of betelnut garden was given by Raṭṭarāja. There is a specific mention that this garden was given to the grand daughter of the brāhmaṇa Sansaiyya for her livelihood. Unfortunately Valipattan is not yet identified. However, the mention of another place viz., Hañjaman which probably represents modern Sañjān<sup>15</sup> (the coastal town of Gujarat) shows that Vallipattan must be another coastal town of North Konkan - somewhere in Thāne or Raigad district.

All these inscriptions throw light on the horticultural production, especially the betelnut gardens. Of course, many fruit gardens were planted for the commercial purpose. The commercialisation of the horticultural gardens can be traced in Mahul<sup>16</sup> inscription referred to earlier as well as Vallipattan inscription. The Mahul inscription gives the important

information about the donation of betelnut garden as well as 3% tax levied on it. The surplus production of betelnuts and its high market value must have been probably the reason behind the tax levied on it. The Vallipattan copper plate inscription also supports this view. The betelnut garden was donated to the grand daughter of the brāhmaṇa Sansaiyya for her livelihood which shows that it must be a commercial crop - so that the income from that garden would be sufficient for her livelihood. The very surprising thing here is the fact that the donation was made to a woman. What was the reason of this endowment to a woman is not clear.

Other references to *Māla Vāṭikā* or *Vāḍi* i.e., garden, fruit garden recorded in the inscriptions gives us information that along with normal agricultural products, the horticultural products were also taken and many horticultural gardens were donated to the donees.

Many gardens which were donated were generally, on the occasion of solar or lunar eclipse or some other days which have some religious importance according to the tradition. For example, the Vallipattan inscription records Saṅkrānti and according to the tradition, by offering donations on these occasions one can gain religious merits.

As the land grants and the donations in cash or in kind was the most common and popular pattern of the endowments of the time, the references to the donations of the gardens shows the growing importance of the horticultural plantation during the Śilāhāra period.

From the above study of inscriptions referring to horticulture, it may be said that the purpose of any horticultural plantation can only be for commercial and not for any domestic consumption. As the reason was solely for commercial, obviously it has contributed towards State Income.

Two inscriptions viz., Mahul and Vallipattan inscriptions studied here refer to the gardens of betelnuts which in turn throw light on the fact that betelnut was and has remained one of the most important cash crops of Koṅkaṇ. These are the early Sanskrit-Marāṭhī references to horticultural as well as the cash crops.

Thus the horticultural plantation must have been given the importance by the Śilāhāras for their charity endowments as well as the taxes which they could levy on the gardens for the purpose of gaining income to the state.

## Notes and References

1. R.G. Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Deccan*, 2nd ed., Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1983, p.121.
2. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, Thana District*, Vol.XIII, Part II, Gazetteers, Dept.Govt. of Maharashtra Reprint - 1986, p.423.
3. Bhandarkar, R.G., *op.cit.*, p.121.
4. *Ibid.*
5. S.B. Dev *Maharashtra Va Gove Silalekh Tamra Patrañchi Varṇanatmak Sandarbha Sūchi*, Insc. No.662, (Marāṭhī) Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskriti Mandal, 1982, p.317.
6. *op.cit.*, p.304, Insc.No.638.
7. *op.cit.*, pp.307-308, Insc. No.643.
8. *op.cit.*, p.320, Insc.No.668.
9. *op.cit.*, p.326, Insc. No.677.
10. S.B. Dev, *op.cit.*, Insc.No.662, p.317.
11. *op.cit.*, Insc. No.638, p.304.
12. *op.cit.*, Insc. No.643; pp.307-308; Also *Gazetteer Maharashtra State - Raigad District* (Marāṭhī), 1993, pp.835-36.
13. *op.cit.*, Insc.No.668, p.320, Also see *Gazetteers of The Bombay Presidency, Thana Dist.*, Vol.XIII, Part II, p.427.
14. *op.cit.*, p.326, Insc.No.677.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *op.cit.*, p.304; Insc.No.638.

# ‘Feminine Element’ in Chamba Inscriptions

Purabi Ghosh Roy

CHAMBĀ, a petty Himalayan state contained a wealth of epigraphical records. Chambā inscriptions belong to the 11th and 12th centuries and are important from the point of view of local history. According to Vögel ‘there is one circumstance which lends to the antiquities of Chambā an interest far exceeding the narrow limits of local history. It is that the past to which they belong, is connected with the present by a tissue of unbroken threads’.<sup>1</sup> The reason being Chambā ‘engirdled by her snow-clad mountain barriers, has, century after century, retained ancient traditions and institutions’,<sup>2</sup> before coming in contact with western civilisation.

The Rānās or petty chieftains played an important part in Chambā inscriptions. The Rānās were local barons ‘who ruled for eight generations, at Kīragrāma, the modern Baijnāth in Kāngrā’<sup>3</sup>. Special mention can be made of three inscriptions. These inscriptions are Dēvī-rī-kōṭhī inscription, Mūlkihār inscription and Sarāhan inscription. As to the contents of these inscriptions, the basic theme is love and conjugal devotion which Vögel termed as ‘feminine element’.<sup>4</sup> Dēvī-rī-kōṭhī records a eulogy of Nāgapāla, a local Rānā. It is a fountain inscription engraved on stone slab. The place is named after the goddess Chāmuṇḍādēvī. Verse 12 states that Nāgapāla, a local Rānā after the death of his father, prevented his mother Balhā from committing satī. Verse 13 records that Balhā devoted the rest of her life to the upbringing of her two sons and to the works of piety and religion.<sup>5</sup>

7 pitari param = upētē lōkam = astōka-śōkas = sapadi pati-viyōgā -

8 n = mūrchchitārṁ mātaraṁ svām | anugamana - vidhānād = vārayāmāsa kṛichchhrād = sa naya -

9 vinaya - śālī Vālakēn = ānujēna || 12 || Samjñām = arōpya

satatam ni -

10 yat = ōparāsa - tīvra - vratair = nija - tanum tanutām  
nayantī | vṛiddhim ni -

11 nāya vara - dānam = asau sutau cha dīnē chyām cha sura  
- vairiṇi

12 ch = aiva bhaktim (tim) || 13 ||<sup>6</sup>

From Dēvī-rī-Kōṭhī inscription we get the information that the custom of *satī*, though not universally practised, existed at least among the noble families of Chambā. The inscription tells us that Balhā, after the death of her husband lived a life of austerity-

"henceforth, whilst by rigid vows of constant fasts she reduces her body to meagreness, brought up her sons and increased her charity, her compassion for the poor and her devotion of Kṛishṇa. And concerning at every step the world of living to be unstable like the crescent reflected in a garland of waves, restless and trembling with the fleeting breeze, had this cistern made for the sake of the bliss of her lord"<sup>7</sup> - a philosophy of self denial, later on prescribed for women in general and widows in particular. Verse 15 tells us that Balhā constructed a particular water-tank in memory of her deceased husband.

14 javana-pavana - vēllal = lōla - kallō -

15 la - mālā pratimita - śaśī - lēkhā chañchalam jīvalōkam  
(kam) [1\*] prati -

16 padam = avabuddhyā chōkarōt = s = ātha Balhā nija -  
pati - sukṛitārtham pushka -

17 rā - dhāram = ētam || 15 ||<sup>8</sup>

Mūlkihār fountain inscription was built by the husband and the children of a noble lady named Sūramati 'to allay the grief caused by her death'.<sup>9</sup>

To quote Vögel "In the half-obliterated lines of the Mūlkihār stone we still read of tears shed by the chieftain of that place and his children, when hostile fate separated her-his most beloved, seated on his lap, the delight of his eyes, praised by all mankind - from her husband, even as the passing of the parvan separates the Moon - sickle from the hot-rayed Sun".<sup>10</sup>

..... the fire (of grief) of her dear relation —— was slowly allayed be sprinkled with the stream of the water of his eyes.<sup>11</sup>

20. For water is life in (this) world, water is breath, water is strength.<sup>12</sup>

Of Dēvirī-Kōṭhī inscription and Mūlkihār inscription Vögel says "I know of no Indian inscription in which true human sentiment finds so eloquent an expression as in these two - alas! Irreparably mutilated fountain slabs nor would it be easy to point to another group of epigraphical records in which the feminine element is so prominent as in those of Chambā".<sup>13</sup> Of love and conjugal bliss, what Vögel calls "feminine element" to quote Sigmund Freud, what constitutes masculinity or femininity is an unknown element which it is beyond the power of anyone to grasp'.<sup>14</sup> In a patriarchal society there are two different yardsticks for women and men. While woman is expected to be shy, submissive, tolerant, man is considered to be aggressive, dominant and adventurous.

Sarāhan praśasti - states that a chief named Sātyaki 'dedicated a fane to the moon crowned Śiva in order to established a firm friendship between his wife, the beauteous Sōmaprabhā, and Śiva's spouse, the mountain daughter Durgā',<sup>15</sup> an example of conjugal bliss.

18 aprachyavam śailajayā sah = ā

19 syāt = sakhyam = ity = ētad = asau narēndrah |  
achīkarat = dēvakulaṇ = kalaṇka - muktēndu - lēkh = ānkita  
= Śēkharasya || 21 ||<sup>16</sup>

From the term Narēndra, applied to Sātyaki, it is evident that he belonged to the warrior caste.<sup>17</sup> The Rāṇās of Chambā were like the knights of medieval Europe',<sup>18</sup> their entire life being centred round love and war. 'But their love was often the devotion of the husband, and their warlike spirit was not rarely displayed, in the royal service to their lord'.<sup>19</sup>

According to Vogel, the Sarāhan praśasti 'is a love poem carved in stone'.<sup>20</sup>

No doubt the eulogies of Sarāhan, Dēvirī-kōṭhī and Mūlkihār give us information about the socio-political conditions of that period. This is to be noted that 'the past which a historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present'. Further, "history is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of thought whose history he is studying".

Chamba inscriptions are important for local history, 'as in

most cases they are fully dated, both according to the era in use and in the regnal year of the ruler of the time.'

### Notes and References

1. J.Ph.Vögel, *Antiquities of Chamba state*, pt.I, preface p.i.
2. *Ibid.*, p.ii
3. *Ibid.*, p.110.
4. *Ibid.*, p.112.
5. *Ibid.*, p.210.
6. *Ibid.*, p.211.
7. *Ibid.*, p.212.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p.231.
10. *Ibid.*, p.112.
11. *Ibid.*, p.231.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p.112.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, p.152.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p.154.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, 112. .

# James Prinsep and Indian Epigraphy

Ajay Mitra Shastri

## I

### INTRODUCTORY

JAMES PRINSEP (1799-1840) was one of the extremely rare geniuses the world has ever seen. Within a short life of just a little over four decades he could achieve so much in so many diverse and totally unrelated fields including, *inter alia*, civil engineering, town-planning, architecture, meteorology, astronomy, natural sciences, numismatics and epigraphy as few could even think of. His attainments would look even more impressive if we remember that he had no formal schooling or grooming in most of these disciplines and cultivated the last two purely as a hobby and none forced him to take these up. And what is most remarkable, he did all the work that he did in the twin chosen fields of epigraphy and numismatics just within a short span of some seven years (1832-38) in addition to his official duties in the Calcutta Mint, first as Deputy Assay Master under Wilson and later as Assay Master. And these attainments were much superior to what an ambitious person can think of achieving in his lifetime and can be proud of.

And the Asiatic Society of Bengal founded in 1784 by Sir William Jones has a great share in it as it was in the period of his association with it during his stay at Calcutta and more especially after he assumed the office of the Secretary (1832 onwards) that he did all this work which was not possible at any other institution. Ever since its foundation it had become the focal point of all the research activities of the Europeans in the East India Company's service or engaged otherwise who had even the slightest interest in knowing about the things and the people they came across in the course of their normal work. Being themselves unable to ascertain their significance, they forwarded either the material itself or communications or illustrations which were, studied or published by the officials of the Society. Major Herbert's journal captioned *Gleanings in*

Science had a new avatār in 1832 when Prinsep transformed it into the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (JASB)* issued monthly and carrying research material in any discipline concerning any part of Asia. And it was in the pages of this journal that almost all the Indological contributions of Prinsep were published.

## II

### SCRIPTS

During this period his writings were principally in two fields, epigraphy and numismatics, which form the chief sources of early Indian history. We are concerned in these pages with his contributions to epigraphical studies. But to make a correct estimate of the great value of his work in this discipline it is necessary to have an idea of the state of things in this field before him.

#### Brāhmī

As early as the fourteenth century A.D., if not earlier, Indian *Pandits* had already become ignorant of the Brāhmī script as shown by the fact that they were unable, to decipher the *Aśoka*n edicts on the lithic columns brought with great effort by the enterprising emperor Feroz Shah Tughlaq from Toprā (Siwālik) and Meerut to Delhi in 1356 AD as described by Shams-i-Siraz in detail. Akbar's attempts to get these records read also were doomed to be a failure. It was after the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 that attention was paid to all sorts of Indian antiquities, and inscriptions too received concern. In 1785 Charles Wilkins deciphered the Bādal (Dinājpur district, Bangladesh) pillar inscription of the Pāla king Nārāyaṇapāla (c.855-910 AD). In the same year *Pandit* Radhakanta Sharma read three epigraphs of the Chāhamāna king Vīśaladēva (Vigraharāja) inscribed on the Delhi-Toprā pillar of Aśoka, one of which is dated in (Vikrama) samvat 1220. These records being rather late and their characters being quite close to their modern Nāgarī derivatives, it was not very difficult to read them. However, a breakthrough in deciphering substantially earlier records was made by Wilkins who, in 1785-89, succeeded in reading the Nāgārjuni and Barābar (Gayā district, Bihar) cave inscriptions of the early Maukhari king Anantavarman belonging to about

the sixth century AD. These, being chronologically close to the Gupta age, their decipherment led to the recognition of nearly half of the so-called 'Gupta' alphabet. Col. James Todd had a large number of inscriptions of Rajasthan and Gujarat dating between the seventh and fifteenth centuries A.D. read by Yati Jñānachandra between 1818 and 1823. A serious headway in deciphering the Gupta alphabet was the partial reading of the Allāhābād pillar inscription of the Gupta emperor Samudra Gupta by Capt. Troyer in 1834 followed by its completion in the same year by Mill who also read in 1837 the Bhītārī pillar inscription of Skanda Gupta. W. H. Botham read several inscriptions of the Maitrakas<sup>1</sup> of Valabhī in 1835.

The decipherment of early Brāhmī records of pre-Gupta period, however, was a hard nut to crack. As early as 1795 Sir Charles Mellet prepared impressions of several short records and forwarded them to Sir William Jones who passed them on for decipherment to Wilford who was misled by a Sanskrit *pandit* into wrong readings which he sent along with the estampages to Sir William Jones with whom they lay for quite sometime when no effort was made to read them as well as other early records like those of Aśoka on the Delhi and Allāhābād pillars.<sup>2</sup>

Such was the scenario when Prinsep made his appearance on the scene. In 1834 he procured impressions of the Allāhābād, Radhiā and Mathiā pillar edicts of Aśoka<sup>3</sup> and on comparing them with the same emperor's Delhi pillar edicts discovered that they were different versions of the same edicts. On analysing the letters he found out the presence of the medial signs (*mātrās*) in these inscriptions as in those of the Gupta and subsequent periods, thereby establishing the unity and continuity of the early Brāhmī and subsequent Indian scripts. He first separated the vowels and medial signs and then consonants, and a comparison with the Gupta alphabet enabled him to settle their sound-values and classify them phonetically. As a result he was able to identify most of the Brāhmī characters and prepare an alphabetical chart most of which was found to be correct. And this became possible as a result of his devoted intelligent hard work. We learn that for seven long years of his secretaryship of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Prinsep spread before him every morning the

impressions of the inscriptions collected from different parts of India. In this he was also helped by his decoding of the legends on a large number of coins found from different parts of the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan, and in the process the recognition of the component characters of the coin-legends also was facilitated by his successful decipherment of these epigraphs. In this connection also noteworthy and contributing to the identification of the sound-values of a few Brāhmī signs was the decipherment of the reverse Brāhmī legend on some of the coins of the Indo-Greek king Agathocles by Ch. Lassen in 1836. This also helped to remove the earlier rampant notion that the records on what were later recognised as Aśokan pillars were in Greek script and perhaps put up by Alexander in commemoration of his victory over Porus.

Another step, a final one, in the direction of unravelling the mystery of the Brāhmī script was taken by Prinsep in 1837 which resulted in adding to the number of letters deciphered besides tracing the progress of Aśokan Brāhmī. It was made possible with the help of numerous short votive records on various architectural members of the well-known *stūpas* at *Sāñchi* in Central India. It is better described in his own words:<sup>4</sup>

‘In laying open the discovery of this nature, some little explanation is generally expected of the means by which it has been attained. Like most other inventions, when once found, it appears extremely simple, and as in most others, accident, rather than study, has had the merit of solving the enigma which has so long baffled the learned’.

‘While arranging and lithographing the numerous scraps of facsimiles, for Plate XXVII [i.e. the *Sāñchi* inscriptions] I was struck at their all terminating with the same two letters, *danam*. Coupling this circumstance with their extreme brevity and insulated position, which proved that they could not be fragments of a continuous text, it immediately occurred that they must record either obituary notices or, more probably, the offerings and presents of votaries, as is known to be the present custom in the Buddhist temples of Ava; where numerous *dhwajas* or flag-staffs, images and small *chaityas* are crowded within the enclosure, surrounding the chief cupola, each bearing the name of the donor.

The next point noted was the frequent occurrence of the letter, *sa* already set down incontestably as *sa*, before the final word: now this I had learnt from the *Saurāshṭra* coins, deciphered only a day or two before, to be one sign of the genitive singular, being the *ssa* of the Pāli, or *sya* of the Sanskrit. 'Of so and so the gift', must then be the form of each brief sentence; and the vowel *ā* and *anusvāra* led to the speedy recognition of the word *dānam* (gift) teaching me the very two letters, *d* and *n*, most different from the known forms, and which had foiled me most in my former attempts. Since 1834 also my acquaintance with ancient alphabets had become so familiar that most of the remaining letters in the present examples could be named at once on re-inspection. In the course of a few months I thus became possessed of the whole alphabet, which I tested by applying it to the inscriptions on the *Delhi* column.<sup>4</sup>

Applying this master-key furnished by what he called 'the early Bhilsā alphabet' which completed the task of decoding the Brāhmī script in the so-called 'Buddhist group of coins', in June 1837, he tried to decipher the legends of some Kuninda, Yaudhēya and allied species found by Capt. P.T. Cautley at Behāt. But his attempt was not very successful. He was able, finally, to read the legend on a copper coin from Behāt correctly as *mahārājasa*, though his interpretation of the legend and ascription of the coin were rather strange.<sup>5</sup> He read the legend on the obverse of the well-known Amōghabhūti series of Kuninda coins *Amapasātasa Mahārāja ... kunarasa*,<sup>6</sup> there by making the attribution of the coin uncertain. As regards the later anonymous Kuninda series, he proposed to read the legend partially as *Bhagavata cha (or sa)*, and, despite stressing the use of palaeography as a chronometer, tentatively suggested their ascription to a king named Bhāgavata who, according to the Purāṇik list, ruled over Magadha about 80 B.C.<sup>7</sup> However, as shown by us elsewhere, the character *ch* in the legend is actually the initial letter of the word *chitrēśvara-mahātmanah* which refers to god Śiva represented on the obverse who is still worshipped in the Garhwāl region under the name Chitrēśvara.<sup>8</sup> He correctly read the letters *ya dha ya* on the Yaudhēya coins of the Bahudhānyaka series, but thought that they were parts of the name Ayōdhyā.<sup>9</sup> He, in partial modification of Lawen's reading, himself proposed to read the Brāhmī legend on the reverse of some of the copper

coins of the Indo-Greek king Agathocles as *yaja Agathuklayej*, as, he felt, that the Greek genitive case was rendered as literally as possible into Pāli<sup>10</sup> character.<sup>11</sup> And basing on Charles Masson's drawing he read the similar legend on the coins of Panteleon as *Pantelewanā*<sup>12</sup> and placed both these kings in c. third century BC on palaeographical grounds.<sup>13</sup>

He conceded the identification of the Piyadasi of inscriptions with the Maurya emperor Aśoka as suggested by Turnur<sup>14</sup> and recognised the Indian forms of the names of some Greek kings of Greece, North Africa and West Asia in two of his rock edicts (II and XIII) at Girnār: these included *Yonarāja* Antiyoka (Antiochus II Theos of Syria and Western Asia, 261-46 BC), Turamaya (Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt, 285-17 BC), Antekina (Antigonos Gonatas of Macedonia, 277-39 BC) and Maga (Megas of Kyrene in North Africa, c. 282-58 BC) all of whom were living in 260 BC and thus helped to fix the period of Aśoka more closely basing on the synchronism afforded by these references.<sup>15</sup>

On analysing carefully the Brāhmī alphabet of the Aśokan edicts and some coins Prinsep recognised the fact that 'the alphabet will be found to contain element of the corresponding member, not only of the Dēvanāgarī, but of the Kanauj, the Pāli, the Tibetan, the Hala Kanara, and of all the derivatives from the Sanskrit<sup>16</sup> stock'.<sup>17</sup> He also tried to make an analytical study of the forms of the aspirated letters and concluded that they appeared 'to have been formed in most cases by doubling the simple characters', and this he tried to substantiate with examples including the letters *chh*, *ṭh*, *dh*, etc.,<sup>18</sup> a conclusion which is certainly true in some cases like *chh* and *ṭh* atleast. He also made a palaeographical study of the forms of letters and classified them phonetically.<sup>19</sup>

Palaeography is now rightly regarded as the basis of deciding the period of a record and of the event recorded in it, and this is the only dependable ground for chronological purposes in cases where the date is neither recorded in the text of the epigraph nor known from other sources. After analysing what he called 'Indian Pāli Alphabets' he prepared a table showing the modifications of this alphabet from time to time<sup>20</sup> and concluded that it 'furnishes a curious species of palaeographic chronometer, by which any ancient monument may be assigned

with considerable accuracy to the period at which it was written, even though it possesses no actual date.<sup>21</sup> He tried to apply it to determine the period of some coin-series and personages represented by them.<sup>22</sup> He dated the beginnings of this script in the sixth century BC as he supposed 'that the alphabet which we possess, as used by the Buddhists of a couple of centuries later, was that in which their sacred works had been written by the contemporaries of the Buddha himself, who died in the year 543 B.C.'<sup>23</sup> After showing the chronological development of the various scripts which had their origin from Brāhmī he regretted 'that our printers did not take for their standard the form that would have served to blend the Bengali and the Hindi into a common system.'<sup>24</sup> In view of these exquisite contributions Thomas appears justified in regretting that Prinsep 'did not live longer to complete a more consistent and mature theory of palaeography.'<sup>25</sup>

During the time of Prinsep the correct nomenclature, of this script was still unknown, and therefore he called it by various names like the 'Indian Pāli alphabet' or 'Sanskrit alphabet' (in connection with Aśokan script).<sup>26</sup> And he applied to the script employed in Aśoka's Brāhmī edicts the name 'the alphabet of the Lāṭs' or 'the lāṭ alphabet',<sup>27</sup> inasmuch as it was first noticed on his pillars which were popularly known as Lāṭ derived from the word *lashṭi*. Prior to the decipherment of 'lāṭ characters' he called the script employed in Western Indian cave inscriptions as Nāgarī.<sup>28</sup>

He christened the Western Kshatrapas of the line of Chashtāna 'Sāh' because of his reading of the name ending *sēna* in many of the personal names as *sāha*, and referred to the script used on their coins and in inscriptions by this name.<sup>29</sup> With the help of *paṇḍit* Kamalākānta he prepared a transcript and an English rendering of the Junāgaḍh inscription of Mahākshatrapa Rudradāman I,<sup>30</sup> which was, however, quite defective and led to some erroneous conclusions. He read the name of Chashtāna's son as Aridāmā or Atridāmā. He deciphered the name of Tushāspa and some preceding letters alternatively as *Aśokasya toyavanarājēna* which he proposed to interpret as 'by Aśoka's rāja (or lord) of the floods and forests.' He dated Chashtāna before Chandragupta Maurya and credited him with the original construction of the

Sudarśana 'bridge' which was repaired after a devastating flood by his son Arimitra or Atrimitra and thereafter reconstructed and completed respectively by Chandragupta Maurya and his grandson Aśoka. He read the name of Jīvadāman on his coins as Jinadāmā which he interpreted as 'wearing Buddha as necklace.'<sup>31</sup>

Prinsep also read the pre-decimal Brāhmī numeral signs<sup>32</sup> and felt that the letter-signs were used for this purpose. In this connection he referred to the use of the expression *varṇa-saṅkhyā* or numerical classification of the alphabet. He recognised that on the Kshatrapa (Prinsep's Sāh) silver coins the numerical signs for dates appeared behind the royal head and also on base metal coins without portraits. He also gave a chart of the various numerals from inscriptions known to him.<sup>33</sup> However, the notion that it were the signs for letters that were employed as numeral signs is not yet fully established. Thereafter, in 1837-38, he read the Gupta inscriptions including those on the *Sāñchī stūpa*, Mehrauli (Delhi) iron pillar, Kahaum and Eraṇ pillars and the Gīrnār rock, fairly successfully.

### Kharoshṭī (or Kharoshthī)

As a remit of the strenuous efforts of Col. James Todd, Gen. Ventura, Sir Alexander Burns and other Europeans a large number of coins of what we now know as the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and the Kadphises group of the Kushānas bearing legend on both the sides was collected from the Uttarāpatha region of Bhāratavarsha (Indian sub-continent) and Afghanistan. The legends on their obverse were in Greek script and language which were read quite easily and revealed so many names of early foreign rulers of India. But early efforts at reading the reverse legends on these coins were not so successful due to unwarranted speculations about their language, not to speak of the characters which were then altogether unknown. The reverse legend on the coins of Kadphises was pronounced to be Sassanian by Col. Todd in 1824,<sup>34</sup> while in 1833 James Prinsep referred to the characters of the reverse legend on some coins of Apollodotus as Pahlavi<sup>35</sup> and on another coin found from the Manikyāla stūpa<sup>36</sup> as Pālī.<sup>37</sup> He felt, due to the cursive appearance of

the script, that it was only a cursive form of the Pālī (Brāhmī) alphabet and conjectured that the difference between the characters of Aśokan edicts and of the reverse-legends of these coins was akin to that between the printed Nāgarī letters and their hurriedly written cursive forms.<sup>38</sup> But shortly after he realised the ineptness of this surmise and again he switched over to his Pahlavi theory while taking note on an epigraph in the same script found by Capt. Court in 1834 in a *stūpa*,<sup>39</sup> and the mystery of the script could not be solved until sometime later when Charles Masson realised the identity of the names and titles in the legends on both the sides and was able to read on the reverse the Indian forms of the names Menander, Apollodotus and Hermeaus and the titles Basileos and Soterios. He forwarded his findings to Prinsep<sup>40</sup> who found them correct and applying them was himself able to recognise names of twelve kings and six titles in the reverse legends and fix the equivalence of obverse Greek legends and the reverse legends as well as determine that the script of the latter ran from right to left (instead of left to right as in case of Brāhmī) and was therefore of the Semitic group. However, he was still uncertain about the language of these characters which he thought was Pahlavi which obscured the correct identification of the letters for sometime. But in July 1838 on finding the Pālī (Brāhmī) legends on the coins of Pantaleon and Agathocles he rightly realised that the language of these legends was akin to that of those on these coins. viz., Sanskrit or Pālī, and with this realisation was able to identify as many as seventeen characters of this script.<sup>41</sup> He gave a detailed explanatory note and a comparative chart of Greek and Kharōshthī (or Kharōshthi) legends on the coins of some Indo-Greek kings.<sup>42</sup> Later the task was completed by E. Norris who recognised another six characters and Alexander Cunningham who read the remaining eleven characters as well as conjuncts on the coins.<sup>43</sup>

Prinsep, like his Western predecessors and contemporaries, used the names Bactrian alphabet, Arian Pālī or Bactrian Pālī for what is now called Kharōshthī or Kharōshthī to distinguish it from Brāhmī which was called simply Pālī or Indian Pālī or Sanskrit or Nāgarī alphabet.<sup>44</sup>

## II

## Resume

The above is only a brief account of James Prinsep's monumental contribution in the domain of Indian epigraphy, a comprehensive survey and evaluation being beyond the purview of a short paper like the present one. But it is enough to give a summary idea of the invaluable contribution made by him within a very short span of much less than just a decade without which it is simply impossible even to think of the present highly developed state of this discipline and the historical information derived from it.

## Notes and References

1. Valabhī (modern Wālā, Bhavnagar district, Gujarat), being their capital, their dynasty was also called Valabhī. In this connection it is worth remembering that the Arabic scholar Abu Raihan-ibn-Muhammad, better known as Al-beruni among historians, also refers to the Maitraka dynasty as Valabha.
2. This is summarised without references from Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha, *Bhāratiya Prāchīna Lipimālā* (Hindi), second edn., Ajmer, 1918, pp.37-40.
3. It was much later that the fact that they belonged to him came to be ascertained.
4. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (JASB)*, VI, 1837, pp.460-77; 566-609; cited in *The History and Culture of the Indian people, I: The Vedic Age*, eds. R.C.Majumdar and A.D.Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhāvan, Mumbai, 1951, p.67.
5. *Vide Essays*, I, p.203; II, p.2. His earlier reading was *parājasa*.
6. *Ibid.*, I, p.203; II, p.2.
7. *Ibid.*, I, p.117; II, p.3.
8. 'Interesting Kuṇḍa and Yaudhēya Coins', *Numismatic Digest*, VIII, 1984, pp.24-29.
9. *Essays*, I, p.202.
10. A name for Brāhmī adopted in the absence of the knowledge of the correct name.
11. *Ibid.*, II, p.4.
12. *Ibid.*, II, p.5.

13. *Ibid.*, II, p.7.
14. *Ibid.*, II, p.13.
15. *Ibid.*, II, p.18-21.
16. This was one of the names employed by Prinsep for what is actually Brāhmī.
17. *Ibid.*, II, p.8.
18. *Ibid.*, II, pp.8-9.
19. *Ibid.*, II, pp.8-12.
20. *Ibid.*, II, Pls.XXXVIII-XXXIX. Also cf. the chronologically arranged palaeographical chart facing pages 52 and 53 provided by E. Thomas.
21. *Ibid.*, II, pp.35-39, especially p.39.
22. *Useful Tables*, John Murray, London, 1858, pp.220-21.
23. *Ibid.*, II, p.39.
24. *Ibid.*, II, p.40.
25. *Ibid.*, II, p.41.
26. *Ibid.*, II, p.39.
27. *Ibid.*, I, p.216.
28. *Useful Tables*, pp.220-21.
29. *Ibid.*, I, pp.270, 334; II, 55ff., 85, 86, 91, 93.
30. *Ibid.*, II, pp.55-60.
31. *Ibid.*, II, 60-64.
32. He called them 'Ancient Sanskrit numerals' in keeping with his designation to the Brāhmī script as Sanskrit script as we have seen above.
33. *Ibid.*, I, pp.247, 253, 256, 262; II, pp.70-80 and Pl.XL.
34. *Asiatic Researches*, XVIII, p.578.
35. *JASB*, II, p.313.
36. *Ibid.*, pp.313, 316.
37. A misnomer for Brāhmī.
38. *Ibid.*, III, pp.318-19.
39. *Ibid.*, III, pp.557-563.
40. *Essays I*, pp.178-85; II, pp.128-43.
41. 'Additions to Bactrian Numismatics and Discovery of the Bactrian Alphabet', *JASB*, July 1838, pp.636-58; reproduced in *Essays*, II, pp.125-42.

42. *Ibid.*, I, pp.178-85 and Pl.XII. But he continued to refer to the script of the reverse legends as Pahlavi even after he had recognised that the language was Indian. Also see his description of some coins with only Greek legends, *ibid.*, I, pp.185-90. For illustration of these coins, see *ibid.*, I, Pls.XIII-XVIII.
43. *Ibid.*, I, p.97, fn.1; pp.175-85; II, pp.125-42. *Vide also* A.Cunningham, 'Coins of Indian Buddhist Satraps', *JASB*, VIII, 1854, p.714, cited by E.Thomas in his editorial note in *Essays*, I, p.97, fn.1.
44. *Ibid.*, II, pp.125-32 and 132-43. .

# Inscribed Sculpture of Muruga

C. Veeraraghavan

AN EARLY sculpture of Muruga with unique features bearing an inscription in early Tamil script was discovered recently.

Even though Muruga is the pre-eminent deity of the Tamils, celebrated in literature from Saṅgam age, he is conspicuous by his absence in early Tamil inscriptions. Free standing iconographic representations of Muruga are quite rare in Tamilnadu before the 9th century A.D. The earlier representations of the deity are mostly confined to the *Sōmāskanda* panels and niche figures in the Pallava temples and rock cut shrines.

The sculpture reported here is found in the open, outside a modern temple of Ayyappaṇ in Kīlperumpākkam village, about 2 km. south-east of Villupuram town (headquarters of the District of the same name), about 160 km south of Chennai.

Along with this sculpture are found the sculptures of a *Jyēsthā* and a *Śivaliṅga*, leading to the surmise that there was an ancient Śiva temple here, to which the present sculpture belonged.

The sculpture is in bas-relief carved on an upright granite stele with a semi-circular top and straight edges on other sides. The height of the stele is 108 cms., its width 62 cms. and thickness 20cms.

The deity is seated on a lotus with his right leg folded and left leg hanging down. Seated figures of Subrahmaṇya are rare, the present sculpture being probably the earliest. Figures of Subrahmaṇya seated on a lotus are rarer still.

The deity is shown wearing a short conical basket like head-gear (*Karanda-makūṭa*) with a thick circlet of flowers (*kaṇṇi*) around the base. According to ancient Tamil tradition, *kaṇṇi* was the attribute of the warrior. The deity also wears the double shoulder - string (*channavīra*), another attribute

of the warrior. Both the attributes, found mostly in the earlier sculptures of the Pallava period, emphasise the fact that Muruga was essentially a warrior - god.

The deity is also adorned with large ear-rings (*makara-kundala*), a close fitting necklace (*kantikai*), bracelets (*katāka*) around his arms and wrists and anklets (*kalal*) on his feet, the last being the special insignia of a heroic warrior. He is also shown wearing a waist - band (*udara-bandha*) with the knot in front. The folds of the dhōti are realistically depicted.

The deity is shown with four arms. The upper right hand holds a weapon with a short handle, The thunder bolt (*vajra* or *śakti*) was inherited from Indra when Subrahmanya became the Warrior - God par-excellence.

The upper left hand holds a rosary (*akshamālā*) and the lower right hand a lotus bud. The lower left hand is shown resting on the left thigh. The rosary and the lotus bud are the attributes of Brahma shared by Murugan in his capacity as the god of knowledge (Subrahmanya). The rosary is usually held in the right hand, as in the present case and similar instances are known. All the three attributes held in hands by the deity in this sculpture, namely the thunderbolt (weapon), rosary and the lotus bud are known to Tamil literary tradition. It is, however, significant that three other attributes which are closely associated with Murugan in the Tamil literary tradition, namely the lance (*vēl*), cock-banner (*chēval-kodī*) and peacock mount (*mayil-urti*) are not depicted. These features begin to appear in the iconography of Murukan in the Tamil country only from a later period.

A unique feature of this sculpture is the brief inscription incised on the slab forming the back ground to the sculpture in the narrow space below the armpits and above the thighs of the deity. Apart from the hero-stone and the Jaina rock carving, inscribed sculptures especially of the brahmanical deities are extremely rare in Tamil Nadu.

The inscription contains four lines. The first two lines are engraved below the right armpit of the deity and the next two lines below the left. Two letters in the first line are lost due

to flaking of the rock surface. The rest of the inscription is well preserved and legible. The inscription is written in Tamil characters with an admixture of some Vatteluttu alphabets.

The inscription can be assigned on palaeographical grounds to c.7th century A.D.<sup>13</sup> The iconography of the sculpture also points to the same periods.

The text of the inscription is as follows :

#### LEFT

1. *na...kko*
2. *rr̥i koṭ-*

#### RIGHT

3. *ṭi vi -*
4. *ttadu*

*Na ... k-kor̥ri koṭṭi(ṭu)vittatu .*

*(This image) was caused to be carved by . . . kor̥ri*

**Kor̥ri** : Though only the latter half of the donor's name has survived, there is no doubt that *kor̥ri* is the name of a woman. It is one of the names of the goddess of war and victory (*Durgā*) and was in common use as a personal name in the ancient Tamil country.

**Koṭṭivittadu** : The correct form should be *koṭṭuvittadu* 'which was caused to be carved', from *koṭṭu* 'to hammer, bear > to carve' (as stone) cf. *Paṭimam koṭṭuvittāṇ* (he) caused the image to be carved. (Pallava inscription, 8th century A.D.).

### Aiyanār

In a hamlet known as Tenmaṅgalam, 18km. away from Villupuram town a slab sculpture of Aiyanār was discovered. The sculpture has unique features with decorations. The height of the slab is 120cm and 75 cm is the breadth. He is found seated on a seat with a pillow on the left side. The other aspects seen around him are a lady, a horse, an elephant, a peacock with a pot. At the pedestal of this sculpture is seen the letters belonging to the period of Pallavas.

*Tēr̥kālar Sarugiṇār śeyvittadu.*

The letters are in the form of Tamil script. A detailed study has been made on the script. There is an evidence in the Tamil work *Puraṇāṇūru*, 32nd poem. *Tēr̥kālar* means a person who is referred to as done or carved.

## Goddess Durgā

The worship of Durgā is very popular in India. The evidence of the worship of Durgā is seen as early as the period of Indus valley civilization.

This piece of structure was found from Villupuram.

Durgā is depicted in a benign posture though standing on a buffaloe or Mahisha's head. Her eight arms are shown with attributes.

At the background on top right a fierceful lion is seen and a *triśūl* is near by. On the top left side a parrot and a deer are seen. Below the sculpture there are two seated human figures one of whom is in the process of cutting off his own head and the other one is in the position of praying.

On the right side of the hands there is an inscription of the Pallava period datable to 7 to 8th century A.D. The only word seen is *Srī Nandiparuman*.

This gives an indication that the sculpture belongs to the Pallava king Nandivarman. .

# A New Copper Plate Grant of North Koṅkaṇ Śilāhāras

*S. G. Dhopate*

A SET OF three copper plates was received by the Director of our Institute sometime in October 1998. I am grateful to him for permitting me to study and publish it.

As the plates were intact and the seal was not removed from the set, its total weight was noted, which was 6.920kg. Outer sides being blank of first and third they are engraved on inner sides. The middle second plate is engraved on both sides. The 1st plate has 27 lines, the 2nd plate (a) has 25, and (b) has 25 lines and the 3rd plate has 24 lines, Thus the total lines are 101.

The text contains three invocation verses (1, 2 & 3) praising Gaṇeśa and Śiva. Starting from Vaḍavalī grant text, these verses are appearing on almost all N. Koṅkaṇ Śilāhāra grants. Then starts the eulogy of the ancestors of the donor. Verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 are copied from Berlin Museum copper plates of Chhittarāja. Verses 11, 12, 13 & 14 are copied from Thāṇē copper plates of Nāgārjuna. Verses 15 and 16 are from the text of Arikēsari's Thāṇē grant. Verses 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 are from Panhāle grant of Vikramāditya. The verse 31 is again from Vaḍavalī grant mentioned above. After the dynastic eulogy begins the narration of the achievements of Aparāditya, the ruling king along with his usual titles which are found in Vaḍavalī grant. They occupy lines from 43 on plate 2a up to 53 on plate 2b. In this portion of text we are informed about the camping of the king at a holy place somewhere near present Nhava-Sheva port in Uran taluq of Raigadh district. He was accompanied by 1) Prime Minister Ālhaṇa Nāyaka, 2) The Minister of peace and war Jōjhapēya - prabhu, 3) The Chief of Treasury office Lakshamaṇaprabhu and his Deputy Chhitamaiya-prabhu and 4) The crown prince Kēśidēva, who is called as Mahākumāra.

At this place were also present other sons of the king, royal priest, minor officers, invited and non-invited local dignitaries such as governors, chief district officers, town chiefs, village chiefs, citizens, village population, business community, and all other people of three classes. The crown prince Kēśidēva worshiped, respected and saluted them and proclaimed and explained through the verses 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48, the merits and gains one gets from land donation to the learned brāhmaṇas. All the verses except 34, 38, 39, 40, 42 and 45 are found on Śilāhāra copper plates.

From line 69 which again in prose starts the

- A) **The purpose :** The crown prince and the eldest son of the King Aparāditya desired to obtain the merits of land donation.
- B) **The occasion :** The auspicious day of Solar Eclipse which occurred on Śārvarī cyclic year, i.e. 1042 of Śaka era, on Sunday, in the month of Āśvina, on fifteenth dark moon day of Hindu calender. This date corresponds to the date 24th October 1120 of Christian Era.
- C) **Mahākumāra Kēśidēva** took a dip in the holy waters of Śilātīrtha which existed in Western sea (now known as the Arabian Sea) in Rāma Kshētra, then offered the Sun God flowers and holy water, then after worshipping Umāpati (Lord śiva) donated to fifteen learned Brahmins whose names are given below:

Family	Vedic Branch	Donee	Son of
1) Jāmadagnya	Ṛigvēda	Nārāyaṇa-agnihōtri	Vasudēva-bhaṭṭa
2) "	"	Vasudēva-bhaṭṭa	Trivikrama-bhaṭṭa
3) Bhāradvāja	Yajus	Gaṅgādhara-bhaṭṭa	Śrī Rāma-dīkshita
4) Vasishṭha	Ṛigvēda	Mādhava-bhaṭṭa	Kēśavabhaṭṭa
5) Kāṇva	Bahvṛich	Gautama-bhaṭṭa	Ambarishbhaṭṭa
6) Dhaumya	Ṛigvēda	Mahādeva-bhaṭṭa	Dharmapaṇḍita
7) Bhāradvāja	Bahvṛicha	Gōvinda-bhaṭṭa	Divākarabhaṭṭa
8) Jāmadagnya	"	Nāgadēva-bhaṭṭa	Haradēva bhaṭṭa
9) Vatsa	"	Dāmōdara-bhaṭṭa	Vamadēva-bhaṭṭa
10) "	"	Trivikrama-bhaṭṭa	Kēśava[śhaḍaṅga]
11) Gārgya	"	Padmanābha-bhaṭṭa	Dāmōdara-bhaṭṭa

12) Bhāradvāja "	Nāgāditya-bhaṭṭa	Nārāyaṇa-dīskhita
13) Kāśyapa "	Sūdāna-bhaṭṭa	Lōki-bhaṭṭa
14) Bhāradvāja "	Keśava-bhaṭṭa	Dāmōdara
15) " "	Gōvardhana-bhaṭṭa	Apāghaisāsa

for carrying out the religious duties of the brāhmaṇas such as performing various sacrifices, teaching and continuing the Vedic traditions, day to day offering of *bali* and *charu*, maintaining *vaśvadēva* and *agniḥōtra*, and extending hospitable treatment to the learned persons during their stay in this area; donated them two villages Āurē and Parakuṇē situated in Pranatpali district by Kēśidēva. The salt producing areas are excluded while accurately defining the boundaries at four directions. The details of enjoying the rights and performing duties are as usual. Share of the revenue is also to be enjoyed by his real brothers. No governmental authority would indulge in the day to day administration.

The places of identification became very easy because of donated villages Parakuṇē and Āurē. They are still existing with the same name in Uran taluq of Raigadh district in Maharashtra. These villages are in between Nhava-Sheva port, a newly constructed port of international fame, and Taluq headquarter Uran.

Praṇōtpala is Panavel. It is an another Taluqa place in the same Raigadh district which at that time might had been the headquarters.

The grant is consented by *Mahākumāra* Kēśidēva, the son of *Mahāmaṇḍalēśara* Aparāditya. By the order of king the text is written by the chief of treasurer Lakshmaṇa, and he further states that the omissions and additions be pardoned.

The charter concludes with the auspicious words *maṅgalam mahā śrīḥ*

### The importance of the discovery of this grant :

As found in some of the Śilāhāra grants the name of Chhadvaideva is not appearing in this grant.

Before the discovery of this grant the successors of Aparāditya were known only two, namely Vikramāditya and Haripālādēva. Haripālādēva is known by his stone inscriptions. The Panhāle copper plate grant is in the name of Vikramāditya who was desirous of giving the donation but it appears that it was not executed most probably due to his untimely death. In the year 1138 A.D. Aparāditya executed it on his behalf. As

this grant dates back to 1120 A.D., Kēśidēva, we come to know was his eldest son and thus he is a new member added to the Śilāhāra dynasty. It is somewhat a tragic episode we come to know from this grant that this king was very unfortunate to witness the deaths of his two sons.

From Nhava port, Gharapuri (present Elephanta) is just 3 to 4 km. away in the deep Arabian Sea. In those days the present dilapidated Śiva temple in Gharapuri appears to be of great pilgrim importance.

### TEXT<sup>1</sup>

[Verses 1-2, 11-12, 19, 33-51: *Anuṣṭubh*; verse 13: *Āryā*; verse 17: *Indravajrā*; verse 21: *Mālinī*; verse 6; *Prithvī*; verses 7, 9-10, 14, 16, 20, 22-31; *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*; verse 8: *Śragdharā*; verse 32: *Varṇasastha*; verses 3-5, 15, 18; *vasantatilaka*]

### First Plate

- 1 Ōm<sup>2</sup> Namō vināyakāya || Labhatē sarva - kāryēṣhu  
pūjayā gaṇanāyakaḥ | vighnaṁ nighna[n\*] = sa vaḥ  
pāyād = apāyād = gaṇa-nāyakaḥ || [1 ||\*] Śa vaḥ pātu  
Śivō nityaṁ ya -
- 2 n = maulou bhāti Jāhnavī | Sumēru - śikhar =  
ōdgachchhad = achchha - chandra - kal = ōpamā ||[2\* ||]  
Jīmūtakētu - tanayō niyataṁ dayālur = Jīmūtavāhana  
iti tri - jagat = prasiddhah|
- 3 dēhaṁ tṛṇam = iv = ākalayan pararthē(rthaṁ) yō  
rakshati sma Garuḍāt = khalu Saṁkhachūḍaṁ(ḍam)  
||[3\* ||] Tasy = ānvayē nikhila - bhūpati - mauli - lagna  
- ratna - dyutich = chhurita - nirmala - pā -
- 4 da - pīṭhah || śrī-Sāhasaṁka iva sāhasikaḥ Kapardī  
Śīlāra-vaṁśa - tilakō nṛpatir = babhūva ||[4\* ||] Tasmād  
= abhūch = cha tanayaḥ Pullaśakti - nāmā - śimā - sa
- 5 maḥ sura - gur = ūḍita - rāja - nītēḥ | nirjitya saṁgara -  
mukhē = 'khila - vairi - varga[m\*] nishkaṁ ṭakaṁ jagati  
rājyam = akāri yēna ||[5\* ||] Tataś = cha samabhūt =  
sutō nṛi -
- 6 pa - śirō - vibhūshāmaṇiḥ śītaḥ śrīnir = iva = aparō = '  
ri - kariṇāṁ Kapardī laghuḥ | yadiya - yaśasā jagaty =  
atisāyēna śulūkṛitē na bhāti
- 7 sura - vāraṇō na cha śaśī na dughdh = āmbudhiḥ ||[6\* ||]  
Tasmād = apy = abhavad = vibhūti - padavī - pātraṁ  
pavitrikṛit = āśēsha - kshm = āvalāyō mahīpa - tilakaḥ  
śrī Va -

- 8 ppuvannaḥ sutaḥ | saṁgrām = āṁgaṇa - raṁgiṇ = āsi - latayā lūn = aika - dantā haṭhāt = sarvvē yēna Vināyakā virachitā vidvēshiṇām dantinaḥ ||[7\* ||] Ta-
- 9 smā[j\*] = jātas = tanūjō rajanikara-iv = ānaṁdit = āśēsha - lōkaḥ slāghyaḥ śrī Jhaṁjharājō divasakara iva dhvastha - niḥśēsha - dōshaḥ | Śāmbhōr = yō dvā-
- 10 daś = āpi vyarachayad = achirāt = kīrtanāni sva - nāmṇā sōpanānān - iva maonyē prañata - tanubhṛitām svarga - mārg = ōdyatānām (nām) ||[8\*]<sup>3</sup> Bhrātā tasya tava(tas) = tat = ōjvala (ōjjvala)<sup>3</sup>
- 11 yaśō rāsiḥ prakāśikṛitā śēsha - kshṁ = .āvalayō balī balavatām śrī Gōggirājō = ' bhavat | chāp = ākarshaṇa - karmaṇi praguṇatām tasmin = gatē bhū -
- 12 patau Bhīṣma - Drōṇa - prithā - suta - prabhṛitayaḥ sarvē chamatkāritāḥ || [9\* ||] Tasmād = vismayakāri - hāri - charita - prakhyāta - kirtiḥ sutaḥ śrīmān = Vajja -
- 13 ḍadēva - bhūpatir = abhūd = bhū - chakra - chūdāmaṇiḥ | dōrdaṇḍ = aika - balasya yasya sahasā saṁgrāma - raṁg = āṁgaṇē rājya - śrī[h\*] svayam = ētya vakhasi ratim chakrē
- 14 Murārēr = iva ||[10\* ||] Jayanta iva Vṛitr = ārēḥ Purār = iva Shaṇmukhaḥ | tataḥ śrīmān = abhūt = putraḥ sat = pratāpō = 'parājitaḥ ||[11\* ||] Kārṇas = tyāgēna yaḥ khyā -
- 15 taḥ satyēna cha Yudhishṭhiraḥ | pratāpād = dīpti - mārtaṇḍaḥ kāla-daṇḍas = cha yō dvishām (shām) ||[12\* ||] Sarn = āgata sāmantaḥ aparē = 'pi jagati rakshitā yē -
- 16 na | sa jayati yathārtha - nāmā śaraṇ = āgata - vajrapaṁjarō dēvaḥ ||[13\* ||] Yēna svāgatam = āgatāya vihitām gōmā(mmā)ya nānāvidham | Yēna = iv = Aiyapa -
- 17 dēva - nāmṁi chalitām rājyaṁ sthiraṁ kāritaṁ (tam) | Bhīllam = Amuma(mma)ṇa - vudha - kshitibhṛitām<sup>4</sup> dattaṁ cha yēn = ābhayaṁ tasya śrī - Vi(Bi)rudaiṅka - Rāma - nṛipatēr anyat = ki -
- 18 m = āvarṇyatē ||[14\* ||] Śrīmān = abhūt = tad = anu Vajjaḍadēva - nāmā bhūpāla - mastaka - maṇis = tanayō nayajñāḥ ' Ady = āpi yasya charitāni janāḥ sa -

- 19 mastā rōmāñcha - kañchukita - gātra - latā[h\*] stuvanti  
 ||[15\* ||] Tad = bhrāt = atha tatō = Arikēsari - nṛpō  
 jātaḥ satām sammatō dṛipt = ārāti - kul = āchal = aika
- 20 dalanē dambhōli - līlām dadhat gatvā sai(śai)śava ēva  
 sainya - sahitō dṛiṣṭvā cha Sōmēsvaram tasy = āgrē  
 pitur = ājñayā jagad = alam yaḥ kilī(la) -
- 21 yitv = āgataḥ ||[16\* ||] Tad = bhrātrijō Vajjadādēva -  
 sūnuḥ śrī - Chhittarāja (jō) nṛpatir = babhūva | Śīlāra  
 - vañśa[h] śīsun = āpi yēna nītaḥ parām = unnatim =  
 unna -
- 22 tēna ||[17\* ||] Lamvā (mbā) lakām kucha - kumbha -  
 taḥ - ōpakamṭha - prabhrashta - hāra - latikāni niram -  
 janāni | utkhāta - tikshaṇa - karavāka - vidāritasya yō -
- 23 = ' ntaḥpurāṇi paripamṭha - janasya chakrē ||[18\*] Hat  
 āri-nāri - nētr = āmbhasēka - samvardhan = ādī [\*]  
 vra (bra)h māṇḍa - maṇḍapaṇi yasya kīrtti - vally =  
 =ādhiro-
- 24 hashi(ti) ||[19\* ||] Dṛipt=ārātishu kōpa - kāla - dahanah  
 saubhāgya - Nārāyaṇō vāra - sthriṣhu tato = 'nujah  
 samabhavan = Nāgārjunah kshmāpatih | yasy = ā
- 25 mānusham = ūrjitam bhuja - va(ba)lam dūrā[n\*] =  
 nīsamya dvishām nidr = ātīva raṇ = āmgaṇa - vyaśaninī  
 dōrdaṇḍa - kaṇḍulatā ||[20\* ||] Tadanu tad = anujanmā
- 26 mūrttimān = minakētuḥ kshata - ripu - vibhavō = bhūn  
 = Mummuṇi kshōṇipālāḥ | vidhṛita - dhanushi yasmin  
 = vājini - rājan = āntē va(ba) - labhi -
- 27 d = api va(ba)liyān = vārshikam chāpam = oujjhat  
 ||[21\* ||] Tasmin = nṛpē pravara - kīrtti - śārīra - bhāji  
 Nāgārjunasya tanayō naya chakravartī [\*]

### Second Plate, First Side

- 28 bhūpō=' bhavat = para - dharma = viśudha - dēhaḥ  
 Śīlāra - gōtra - ratnam = Anantapālāḥ ||[22\* ||]  
 Chintāmaṇau praṇayinām nayan = ābhirāmē kāmē
- 29 kuraṅgaka - dṛiśām jagad = ēka - virē | nirvairi - vairam  
 = avanī - valayam vidhāya dharmēṇa pālayati tatra  
 narēndra - chaṇdrē ||[23\* ||] Śrī-Nāgārjuna - rā -

- 30 ja - sūnu - tanayō jītvā tatō bhūtaṁ sa śrīmān =  
Aparājīt = ākhyā nṛpatiḥ patuṁ samarthō = 'bhavaṭ|  
puṇyair = ullasitaṁ śrīyā vi -
- 31 kasitaṁ tejōbhīr = ujḡrīm̐bhitaṁ śouryēṇ = ōditam =  
utthitaṁ guṇa - gaṇair = yasmin mahīm śāsati ||[24\* ||  
śatrūn = saṁharati śrīyaṁ vitanutē śaurya[īm\*] samā -
- 32 laṁva(ba)tē dhattē dhairya-bharaṁ paraṁ raṇa - ras =  
ābhyāśē(sē) purō dhāvati | stōkaṁ vā va(ba)havā(ō) na  
vētti turag = ārūḍhō dṛiḍhaḥ (driḍhaṁ) prauḍhimān  
sāmyaṁ tad = apēkshatē
- 33 satataṁ kasy = āpi tatr = āntarē ||[25\* ||] Āśī (sī)t =  
kō='py = asurō jagad = dalayitum Chhittuṁka - nām =  
āṁdhakas = tat = tat = aiva samastam = ēva militaṁ  
sāmaṁta - chakraṁ tata[h\*]
- 34 dha (dhva) stē dharma - dhanē gatēshu gurushu klishtë  
viśishtë = āśrayē śīrṇē jīrṇa - pura - prajā - parijanē  
mashtë cha rāshṭr = ōdayē ||[26\* ||] [Ē]kaś = ch = aika  
- turaṅgamaś = cha
- 35 bhujayōr = dvaṁdvaṁ cha khaḍgaś = cha taṁ drāk  
= dṛishtvā kaṭarē(kathōrē) raṇē sa rabhasaṁ tat =  
saṁmukhaṁ dhāvitaḥ na yōddhum na palāyitum kim  
= api vā jñātaṁ cha tēna sphu -
- 36 taṁ (ṭaṁ) saṁgrāmaṁ parihṛitya yasya cha bhiyā  
mlēchchh = āśrayē saṁsthiṭaḥ ||[27\* ||] Saṁtaḥ saṁti  
sukhēna garjati guṇi - grāmaḥ pramāṇaṁ bhavēty =  
ētaḍ = dharma - vini -
- 37 rmitaṁ parichit = ābhaṁ(ataṁ)gaṁ jagad = valgati|  
yēna svēna va(ba) lēna haṁta nihatē tasmin = ripau  
tāḥ punar = naṁdati priya - putra - vā(bā)ṁdhava -  
suhṛid - saṁsa -
- 38 rga - sajjāḥ prajāḥ ||[28\* ||] Sō = 'yaṁ puṇyamayaḥ  
samuddhṛitanaya[h\*] sūryaṁ cha yasy = āśrayaḥ sat =  
pātra - pratipatti - ramya - samayaḥ saṁbuddha - śuddh  
= āśayaḥ ||[||]
- 39 saṁgrām = āṁgaṇa - madhya - durddhararayaḥ kāntā  
- kṛita - praśrayas = tad = vaidagdhya - vivēka - sāra  
- nichayaḥ sphūrya (rjja)t = pratāp = ōdayaḥ ||[29\* ||]  
yaḥ satyasya samā -
- 40 śray = aika - bhavanaṁ yaṁ vīra - vṛitti[h\*] śrītā  
dhairyaṁ yēna dhṛitaṁ prajāḥ pratidinaṁ yasmai

- dadatya = āśishah | yasmāt prādurabhūt<sup>5</sup> = vilāsa -  
vishayas = tyā -
- 41 gaś = cha yasy = ōrjitō yatra śrīś = cha Sarasvatī cha  
viśadā kīrtiś = cha lōk = ōttarā ||[30\* ||] Vīry = ōdārya  
- vivēka - vikrama - vidhir = gāmbhīrya - mudr - ā[r̥n\*]  
vu(bu) -
- 42 dhiḥ saubhāgy=aika - nidhiḥ prasiddha - vilasat =  
saṁgīta - vidyā - nidhiḥ | śastr = ābhyāsa - guṇ =  
Ārjuna - prati - nidhir = jīyāt = sahasraṁ samāḥ sa  
śrī -
- 43 mān = Aparājito niravadhiḥ śauryeṇa sat = samnidhiḥ  
|| [31\* ||] Atha svakiya - puṇy = ōdayāt = samatigata -  
pañcha - mahāśabda mahā - sāmānt = ā -
- 44 dhipati Tagarapura - paramēśvara śrī - Śilāhāra -  
narēndra Jīmūtavāhan = ānvaya - pras[ū]ta - suvarṇa -  
Garuḍa - dhvaj = ābhimāna - mah-ōdadhi tyā -
- 45 ga jaga[j\*] = jhaṁiparāya - pitāmaha nija - bhuj =  
ōpārjita - Lakshmi - svayaṁ vara[h\*] paśchima - samudr  
= ādhipati śaraṇ = āgata - vajra - pañjar = ēty = ādi
- 46 samasta - rājāvali - samalaṁkṛita mahā - maṇḍalēśvar =  
ādhipati śrīmad = Aparādityadēvarājē(jyē) nija - bhuj  
= ōpārjit = ānēka - maṇḍa -
- 47 la - samēta - purī - pramukha - chatur = daśa - grāma  
- śatī - samanvita - samasta - Kōmkaṇa - bhuvāṁ  
samanuśāsati tath = aitat = pranā(sā)dāt = avāpta  
samasta - maṇḍa -
- 48 la - chintā - bhāraṁ samudvahati mahāmātya - śrī  
- Ālhaṇa - nāyaka mahā - sāmndhivigrahika - śrī -  
Jōjhapēya - prabhō śrīkaraṇa - Bhāndā -
- 49 gārē prathama - chchēpāṭī = Mahāprādhāna - śrī -  
Lakshmaṇa - prabhō dvitīya chchēpāṭī sēna(nā)pradhān  
- śrī - Cchitamēya - prabhō ity=ādi śrī -
- 50 karaṇē saty = [ē\*] tasmin kālē pravarta mānē  
mahākumāra - śrī - Kēśidēvaḥ sarvān = ēva sva -  
saṁva(ba)dhyamānakān = anyān = api sam = āgāmi -  
rā
- 51 japutra - māntri - purōhit = āmātya pradhān  
= āpradhāna - niyōgikāms = tathā rāshṭrapati -  
vishayapati nagara pati grāmapati niyu -
- 52 ktā - niyukta - rājapurusha - janapadām = tathā  
haṁjamana - nagara paura - tri - varga - prabhṛitīms =  
cha prañati - pūjā - satkāra - samādēśaiḥ saṁdi -

## Second Plate; Second Side

- 53 diśaty = astu vaḥ saṁviditaṁ yathā || Chalā vibhūtiḥ  
kshaṇa - bhaṁgi - yauvanaṁ kṛit = ānta - dant-āntara  
- varti - jīvitaṁ (tam) | tath = āpy = avajñā para - loka  
- sādhanē nṛṇām = ahō
- 54 vismaya - kāri - chēṣṭitaṁ (tam) || [32\*] Tathā ch =  
ōktaṁ bhagavatā Vyāsēna || Uchchhvās = āvadhayaḥ  
prāṇaḥ sa ch = ōchchhvāsaḥ samīraṇaḥ | samīraṇach =  
chalaṁ nāsti ya -
- 55 j = jīvati tad = adbhutaṁ (tam) || [33\*] Āsann = asta  
- ratan = iti mṛityur = jātō dinē dinē | Ādy = āntaṁ  
nīyamānasya va(ba)dhy = asy = ēva padē padē ||[34\*]  
Ati - dānaṁ tu sa -
- 56 rvēshām bhūmi - dānam = ih = ōchyatē | achalā hy  
= akshayā bhūmiḥ sarvān = kāmān = prayachchhati  
|| [35\*] Bhūmidah svargam = āruhya śāsvatir = ēdhatē  
samā[h\*] |
- 57 punaś = cha jaṇma saṁprāpya bhavēt = bhūmipatir =  
dhruvaṁ(vam) ||[36\*] yat = kimchit = kurutē pāpam  
purushō vṛitti - karśitaḥ | api gō-charma - mātṛēṇa  
bhūmi - dānēna śu -
- 58 dhyati || [37\*] || Suvarṇaṁ rajataṁ tāmvrāṁ maṇi -  
muktā vasūni cha | sarvam = ētat = mahārāja dadāti  
vasudhām dadāt ||[38\*] Tayō yajñaṁ sutāṁ śīlam =  
adāhaḥ
- 59 satya - vādinā | guru - daivata - pūjā cha n = ātikram  
= ēti bhūmidah ||[39\*] Bhartur = niśrēyasē yuktā  
saṁgrām = ābhimukhā hatāḥ | aparā dattinaḥ
- 60 surā n = ātikramaṁti bhūmidah ||[40\*] Agnishtōm =  
ādibhir = yajñair = ishtvā vipulā - dakṣiṇaiḥ | na tat  
= phalam = avāpnōti yad = datvā vasudhā nṛipa ||[41\*]
- 61 Sa naḥ kulasya purushaḥ sa nau(h)vaṁ(baṁ)dhuḥ sa  
nau(h)gatiḥ | sa dātā sa cha vikrāntō yō dadāti  
vasuṁdharām(rām) ||[42] Tathā ch = ānta[r\*] - līna -  
jarā - rākshaśi prāravdha(bdha) -
- 62 grāsaṁ yauvana[m\*]svarga - vāsān = naraka - pāta =  
samam = ishṭa - samāgama - viyōga - duḥkha[m\*] kadali  
= garbha vad = asāraḥ saṁsāraḥ sahaja - jarā - maraṇa

- 63 sādharāṇa[m\*] śarīra[m\*] pavana - chalita - kamalinī -  
dala - gata - jala - lava - taralatarē dhan = āyushī  
dṛḍhata - virakti - vu(bu)dhya saṁ -
- 64 grīhyē[tḍha]m (grīhniyāt) ya (dā)na - phalam (lam) [\*]  
kṛita - Trētāt = (tā) Dvāparēshu tapō = 'tyartham  
prasāsyatē | munayō = tra tu śamsanti dānam = ēkam  
kalau yugē ||[43\*] Agnēr = apa -
- 65 tyam prathamam suvarnam bhūr = vaishnavī sūrya -  
sutās = cha gāvaḥ | loka - trayam tēna bhavēt =  
pradattam (ttam) yashkām (yaḥ kām)chana[m\*] gām  
cha mahi[m\*] cha dadyāt || [44\*] Yāvan = niśamya
- 66 mūlām gō-rōmāṇi cha sarvasaḥ(śaḥ) | naraś = tāvaṁti  
varshāṇi svarga - lōkē mahiyatē ||[45\*] Āsphōṭayaṁti  
pitarāḥ pravalgaṁti pitā -
- 67 mahāḥ | bhūmidō = 'smat = kulē jātaḥ sa  
naḥ(san)tārayi-shyanti ||[46\*] Bhūmi - dānam su -  
pātrēshu su - tīrthēshu su - parvasu | agādhā - pāra  
- saṁ -
- 68 sāra - sāgar - ōttāraṇam bhavēt ||[47\*] Dhavalān =  
ātapatrāṇi dantinas = cha mad = ōddhataḥ | bhūmi  
- dānasya pushpāṇi phalam svargam Pu -
- 69 raṁdara ||[48\*] Iti dharm = ādharma - vichāra -  
chatura - chiraṁtana - muni - vachanāny = avadhārya  
Mahākumāra - śrī - Kēśidēvēna ātmanāḥ śrēyōḥ thi  
(yō=rthi) -
- 70 nā mayā Śaka - nṛipa - kāl = ātita - saṁvatsar = ā[m]ta  
- śatēshu daśasu dvi - chatvā riṁśaty = adhikēshu  
pravarttamāna - Śārvari - saṁvatsar = āntargata
- 71 Āśvina - bahula - pañcha - daśyām Ravau yatr =  
āṁkatō = 'pi Śaka - saṁvatu(t) 1042 Āśvina - vadi 15  
Ravau saṁjāta - Sūrya - grahaṇa - parva -
- 72 ni Rāma - kshētr = āntarvartini paśchim = ōdadhau  
Śilā - tīrthē snātīvā gagan = ēka - chakra - chūḍāmaṇayē  
kamalinī - kāmukāya bhaga -
- 73 tē Savitrē nānā - vidha - kusuma - slāghyam = arghyām  
datvā śa(sa)kala - sur = āsura - gurum traī - lōkya -  
svāminam bhagavantam = Umāpatim = abhya -

- 74 rchya yajana - yājan = ādhyāyan = ādhyāpan = ādi  
 - shaṭ - karma - niratēbhyaḥ kratu - kriyā - kāṇḍa  
 - sau(śau)ṇḍēbhyaḥ parama - vrā(brā)hmaṇēbhya[h\*]  
 chatur - daśa(śē)bhya -
- 75 s = tad = yathā [I\*] Jāma[da\*]gna(gnya) - gōtrāya Rīg  
 = vēda - śākhinē Nārāyan = āni(gni) hōtriṇē Vāsudēva  
 - bhaṭṭ = ōpādhyāya - sutāya | Jāmadaga(gnya) -
- 76 gōtrāya Rīg-vēda-śākhinē Vāsudēva - bhaṭṭāya Trivikrama  
 - bhaṭṭa - sutāya | Bhāradvāja - gōtrāya Yaja(juḥ)  
 śākhinē Gaṁgā -
- 77 dhara - bhaṭṭ = ōpādhyāya - śrī - Rāma - dīkshita -  
 sutāya | Vaśi (si)shṭa - gōtrāya Rīg - vēda - śākhinē  
 Mādhava - bhaṭṭāya Kēśava -

### Third Plate

- 78 bhaṭṭa - sutāya | Kāṇva - gōtrāya va(Ba)hvṛicha -  
 śākhinē Gvē(Gau)-tama - bhaṭṭ - ōpādhyāya Amva(mba)  
 rīsha - bhaṭṭ = ōpādhyāya - sutāya | Dhyoumya  
 (Dhaumya) -
- 79 gōtrāya Rīg(Rīg)-vēda - śākhinē Mahādēva - bhaṭṭāya  
 Dharma - paṇḍita - sutāya | Bhāradvāja - gōtrāya  
 Va(Ba) hvṛicha - śākhinē Gōviṁda - bha -
- 80 ṭṭāya Divākara - bhaṭṭa - sutāya | Jāmada - gnya -  
 gōtrāya Va(Ba)hvṛicha - śākhinē Nāgadēva-bhaṭṭāya  
 Haradēva-bhaṭṭa -sutāya | Jāmadagnya - Vatsa - gō
- 81 trāya Va(Ba)hvṛicha - śākhinē Dāmōdara - bhaṭṭāya  
 Vāmadēva - bhaṭṭa - sutāya | Jāmadagnya - Vatsa -  
 gōtrāya Va(Ba) hvṛicha - śākhinē Trivikrama - bhaṭṭāya  
 Kēsa(śa)va - shadga (shad = aṅga) - vi -
- 82 [da\*] - sutāya Gāgrya (Gārgya) - gōtrāya Va(Ba) hvṛicha  
 - śākhinē Padmanābha - bhaṭṭāya Dāmōdara - bhaṭṭa -  
 sutāya | Bhāradvāja - gōtrāya Va(Ba)hvṛicha - śākhinē  
 Nāgāditya - bhaṭṭā -
- 83 ya | Nārāyaṇa - dīkshita - sutāya | Kāśyapa - gōtrāya Va  
 (Ba)hvṛicha - śākhinē Sūdana - bhaṭṭāya Lōki - bhaṭṭa  
 -sutāya | Bhārdvāja - gōtrāya Va(Ba) hvṛicha - śākhi -
- 84 nē Kēśava - bhaṭṭāya Dāmōdara - sutāya | Bhāradvāja  
 - gōtrāya Va(Ba)hvṛicha - śākhinē Gōvardhana -  
 bhaṭṭāya Apāghaisāsa - sutāya | yaja

- 85 na - yājan = ādhyāpan = ādi - shaṭ = karma - karaṇāya  
Va(Ba) li - charuka - vaiśvadēv = āgnihōtra - kratu -  
kriy = ādi - niṣṇāṇāya (nirmāṇāya) āgat = ābhyāgata  
[t = ātithi\*] - sa
- 86 vāhānārthaṁ sva - parivāra - pōshaṇārthaṁ cha  
Praṇōtpala - vishay = āntaḥpātī - Āurē - grāmaḥ  
Tathā - Parukunē - grāmaḥ grīha - drama - dudamē  
(drudrama) i -
- 87 ty = ādi - samasta - rāja - bhōgya - sahitō lavaṇ = āgāra  
- vā(bā) hyam Āurē = grāmasy = āghātanāni pūrvataḥ  
Khāra-nadī dakṣiṇataḥ Khāra - nadī pa -
- 88 śchimataḥ Khāra - nadī uttarataḥ Dōṁgara pumjī  
Pāñilōta | Pirukumē - grāmasy = āghātanāni | pūrvataḥ  
Dōgarī Pāñilōta | dakṣiṇa -
- 89 ta[h\*] Dōgarīpumjī Pāñilōta | paśchimataḥ Khāra -  
nadī | uttarataḥ Talaikā | Ēvam chatur = āghātan =  
ōpalakshitau sva - sīmā - parya[m\*]tō sā - tṛiṇa -
- 90 kāsht - ōdak = opētō sa-daṇḍa - s = āparādhō samāsāt  
= pātra - saṁyuktyā āchāṭa - bhaṭa - prāvēśyō karaṇ  
= āpanīya - śulka - vimuktō pūrva - datta - dē -
- 91 va - dāya - vra(bra)hma - dāya - varjō tathā udaka  
= ādi - sargēṇa namasya - vṛittyā paramayā bhaktyā  
pratipāditō(taḥ) | Tad = ēshā s = ānvaya = vaṁ (bam)  
dhūnām bhu[m\*]jatām bhōja -
- 92 yatā[m\*] va na kēn = āpi pariparinthātā karaṇīyā | yatra  
uktam = ēva mahāmuniḥ[h\*][|\*] Va(Ba) hubhi[r\*] =  
vasudhā bhuktā rājabhiḥ Sagar = ādibhiḥ | yasya ya-
- 93 sya yadā bhūmis = tasya tasya tadā phalaṁ ||[49\*]  
Datvā bhūmim bhāvinaḥ pārvivēndrā[n\*] bhūyō bhūyō  
yāchatē Rāmabhadraḥ | sāmānyō = yaṁ dharma - sētur  
= ni (nri)pā -
- 94 nām kālē kālē pālaniyō bhavadbhiḥ ||[50\*] Iti chiraṁtana  
- muni - vachanāny = avadhārya sarvair = api sam āgā-  
mibhir = asmad = vaṁśajair = anyair = vā bhū =
- 95 pālaiḥ pālana - dharma - pa(pha) la - lōbha ēva  
karaṇīyaḥ | Na punas = tal = lōpana - pāpa - kalaṁk =  
āgrēsarēṇa na kēn = āpi bhavitavyam | yas = tv = ēvam  
= abhyarthi -
- 96 tō = pi lōbhād = ajñāna - timira - paṭal = āvṛita  
= matir = āchchhidya dā (ā) chchhidyamānam =  
anumōdata(tē) vā | sa paṁchabhir = api pātakair =  
upapāta - kaiś = cha li -

- 97 ptō rau - rava - mahā - rau - rav = āndhata - miśrā  
(sr = ā)di narakām chiram = anubhavishyati | yath =  
ōkta[m\*] bhagavatā Vyāsēna | sva - dattā [m\*] para -  
dattā[m\*] vā yō ha -
- 98 ta vasum̐dharām [|\*] sa viṣṭāyām kṛimir = bhūtvā  
bhūmibhiḥ (pitṛibhiḥ) saha pachyatē [|\*][51\*] yathā ch  
= aitad - ēvaṁ tathā śāsana - dātā lēkhaka - hastēna  
sva - matam = ārōpa -
- 99 yata(ti) yathā mi(ma)taṁ mahākumāra - Śrī -  
Kēsidēvasya mahāmaṇḍalēśvara - śrīmad = Aparāditya-  
dēva - sūnō [r\*] = yad = atra śāsanē
- 100 likhitaṁ || likhitaṁ ch = aitan = mayā śrīmad =  
rāj = ānujñayā bhāṇḍāgārē prathama - chchhēpāṭī  
mahāpradhāna śrī Lakhumuṇaiyēna (ṇēna) | yad=atra-  
(=ōnā)
- 101 ksharam = adhik = āksharam vā tat=sarva[m\*]  
pramāṇam = iti || Ma[m\*] gala [m\*] maha(hā) - śrīḥ||

### Notes and References

1. From photographs.
2. Expressed by a symbol.
3. The Panhāle pls. of Vikramāditya reads *tatas=tan=ūjjvala* C.I.I., Vol.VI, p.135, l.10.
4. The Thānē pls. of Nāgārjuna, śaka 961 reads *Bhillam=Āmma-ṇa-Mamva(mbu)va-kṣitibhujām*.

## Temples at Tirumālpuram

S. Swaminathan

THE TEMPLE was the nerve centre of the society and the entire society revolved around the temple. It is said that one should not live in a village which is devoid of a temple. Appar, the Śaivite hymnist deplores such a village as a haunted village. Construction of temples to house gods is deemed as one of the seven pious deeds. In accordance with this laudable ideal, our ancients have utilised their huge wealth in erecting innumerable temple edifices and religious structures in South India. Having these temples as their nuclei, many cities have sprung up like Śrīraṅgam, Tāñjavūr etc., catering to the needs of the people. Much of the socio-religious-politico-economic and cultural activities took real shape in the vicinity of these temples.

Against this background, the temples one of Śiva and another of Vishṇu at Tirumālpuram, North Arcot district have been taken up for study here. It is indeed very appropriate in this temple city that the first endowment lecture of Sri K.Subrahmanyam on temple study is being delivered here. I thank the office bearers especially Dr.K.V.Ramesh, the secretary of the Society for the honour given to me.

Reverting back to the subject, Tirumālpuram is 10 kms from Kāñchī on the road to Arakōṇam in North Arcot district. It is located on the southern bank of the ancient Pālār river. There are two temples of Śiva and Vishṇu now in ruins. Both of them flourished during the period of the Chōla rulers. The deity in the Śiva temple was sung by the Śaivite saints Sambandar and Appar. Sambandar describes Tirumālpuram as a prosperous city (*vaḷarnagar-mārpēru*).<sup>1</sup> The temple was probably of brick construction during the visit of Śaiva saints. It may be noted here that the Vishṇu temple was converted into a stone structure well before the Śiva temple. The earliest record of the Śiva temple belongs to the reign of Uttamachōla

and the same is found engraved on the central shrine.<sup>2</sup> It recounts the earlier grants made to this temple since the time of Āditya I. But an inscription<sup>3</sup> of Parāntaka Chōla I dated in his 37th regnal year (944 A.D.) is engraved on the west wall of the first *prākāra*. It is not unlikely that this record might have been a recopy and inserted into the *prākāra* wall later. Hence, the temple might have been converted into stone structure sometime between the 37th year of Parāntaka I (944 A.D.) and the reign of Uttamachōla (971 A.D.).

The Śiva temple is called Maṇikaṇṭeśvara temple. The name Maṇikaṇṭeśvara is perhaps due to Lord Śiva's coloured neck on account of his consuming poison as described by Sambandar and Appar. Sambandar eulogised the deity here as unblemished Maṇikaṇṭa. This temple contains thirtyeight inscriptions, while the Viṣṇu temple has fortythree.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that the inscriptions of Śiva temple refer to it as Tirumārpēru-mahādēvar, Tirumālpēru-uḍaiyār, Tirumālpēru-Ālvār, etc. The term 'Tirumālpēru' means boon (received by) Viṣṇu. According to Appar's *Tēvāram*,<sup>5</sup> Viṣṇu worshipped the Śiva of this temple with flowers to obtain the disc (*ālī*). According to Māṇikkavāṣagar's Tiruvāṣagam,<sup>6</sup> Lord Viṣṇu out of intense devotion removed his eyes and placed on the feet of Lord Śiva and worshipped. Moved by the devotion of Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva gave a disc as boon to Viṣṇu. The village thus came to be called Tirumālpēru. Lord Śiva who blessed Viṣṇu is called Tirumārpēru-uḍaiyār. The Viṣṇu temple called in the inscriptions as Gōvindappāḍi-ninṇaruliṇā Perumāṇaḍigal, is away from the Śiva temple in a locality now also called Gōvindappāḍi i.e., the abode of Gōvinda. In fact an inscription<sup>7</sup> of Rājarāja I refers to the gift of flower garden for Lord Kṛishṇa i.e., Gōvinda.<sup>8</sup> In modern times the whole area is called Tirumālpuram.

The inscriptions of Śiva and Viṣṇu temple are analysed chronologically. In 944 A.D. during the reign of Parāntaka I, the authorities of the Śiva temple at Tirumālpēru in Valla-nāḍu, in Dāmar-kōṭṭam sold a place of tax-free land to a certain Kāḍagaṇ Kuṇṇiramallaṇ *alias* Chōla-Mārāyaṇ. It suggests that the temple possessed lands and sold them to individuals who paid not only the price but also the tax-money

and donated them back to the temple itself to conduct services or to provide for rituals and special worship to the deity therein.

Next, the inscription of Pārthivēndravarmān<sup>9</sup> 'who took the head of Vīra-Pāṇḍya' refers to the gift of 25 *kalañju* of gold deposited with the *sabhā* of Paṭṭalam *alias* Elunūruvar-chaturvēdimaṅgalam in Dāmar-nāḍu in Dāmar-kōṭṭam for burning two perpetual lamps in the temple at Tirumālperu, one on behalf of his queen Vijjavi-Mahādēvi and another on behalf of her associate. The shepherds who were to measure out oil, to burn the lamps were fed twice daily. In his 4th regnal year (975 A.D.)<sup>10</sup> when the king was staying in his palace at Kachchippēḍu (Kāñchīpuram), it was represented to him through the officer Chōla-mūvēndavēlāṇ and that the village Sirriyārūr in Maṇayil-nāḍu, in Maṇayil-kōṭṭam had been granted in the 21st year of Āditya I (891 A.D.) as *dēvadāna-brahmadēya* to the *sabhā* of Puduppākkam in Purisai-nāḍu in the same *kōṭṭam* with the stipulation that they were to pay as *dēvadāna-iraiyili* to the temple of Tirumāl-pēru-ḍaiyār, 3000 *kāḍi* of paddy as *puravu* and 561 *kāḍi* as *iravu* in addition to 200½ *kalañju* and a *mañjāḍi*. This order was confirmed in the 4th regnal year of Parāntaka I (911 A.D.) excluding from its purview, the lands in the village which had belonged to Śaṅkarappāḍi-kilāṇ for which the owner was to pay independently 3000 *kāḍi* to the temple. In the meanwhile, in the 36th year (943 A.D.) of Parāntaka I, again the *puravu* 3000 *kāḍi* of paddy that accrued as the *mudal* from the *kāṇi* of the *kilāṇ* of Śaṅkarappāḍi was also granted as *dēvadāna-iraiyilli* and the same was entered in the tax register. But the *sabhā* of Puduppākkam is stated to have seized this *kāṇi* of Śaṅkarappāḍi-kilāṇ, who refused to pay the *irai* in respect of the complaint to the king by the *dēvakaṇmis* (administrators of the temple), *Uṇṇāligai-uḍaiyār* (priests) and *paṇmāhēśvarar*. The king summoned both the parties, and after enquiry learnt that the accusation was substantiated. He imposed the fine on the *sabhā* and confirmed the *sabhā* in possession of the said *kāṇi* and it directed them to pay 3000 *kāḍi* of paddy in respect of this *kāṇi* to the temple i.e., in respect of the whole of Sirriyārūr, the *sabhā* of Puduppākkam had to pay 6000 *kāḍi* (of paddy) as *puravu*, 561 *kāḍi* (of paddy) as *iravu* and 26 *kalañju* and 11 *mañjāḍi* as gold levy to the temple. The whole village

thus became a *dēvadāna-brahmadēyam*. The king ordered the contents of this order to be incorporated in the tax register and several officials attested the entry.

In the fourteenth regnal year of Uttamachōla<sup>10a</sup> (984 A.D.) Madhurāntakan Gaṇḍarādittan made an endowment for the supply of 4 *nālī* each of milk, honey, ghee, curd and pulses to be filled in 108 pots and of other ingredients for the sacred bath of the god on every *San̄krānti* day in the temple of Tirumālpēru.

During the period of Rājarāja I, the Śiva temple received several benefactions. In his third regnal year (988 A.D.)<sup>10b</sup>, the temple authorities sold land to Chōla-mādēviyār *alias* Pañchavan-mādēvi, the queen of Rājarāja I. She endowed it to the temple for the lamps. In the very next year (989 A.D.)<sup>11</sup>, the king made a gift of 497 *kaḷaṇḍu* of gold and a flower weighing 2 *kaḷaṇḍu* to god Mahādēvar during his visit to the temple to offer worship. The present is said to have been conveyed by his officer, Arumoli-mūvēndavēḷār.

In the same year<sup>12</sup>, the official Madhurāntakan Gaṇḍarādittan along with other officers, Villavan-mūvēndavēḷār, Rājamārttāṇḍa-mūvēndavēḷār, Tiṇḍi Piḍārar, the pontiff of the *maṭha* at Tirumayānam and also the junior officer Irumbādu-uḍaiyān Mutti Paramēśvaraṇ met at the bathing hall (*snapana-maṇḍapa*) of the Ālyār i.e., Śiva temple. They conducted enquiry into the temple affairs and discerned that the property of god Agnīśvara was misused, the landed property and its produce were misappropriated and the offerings were diminished to just two *nālī* of rice. The erring officials were punished with fines and six pieces of land measuring  $2\frac{1}{2}$  *vēli* were ordered to be resumed and the taxes thereon paid to the Kāmakkōṭṭam in the temple. Besides this, taxes on a *mā* of land at Kulattūr and 225 *kulī* at Siriyārūr were also made over to the temple. In the 997 A.D.,<sup>13</sup> the *sabhā* of Sirūr *alias* Prithvīmādēvi-chaturvēdimāṅgalam agreeing to measure out 225 *kāḍi* of paddy to the temple in the month of *Paṅguṇi* as interest for the 60 *kaḷaṇḍu* of gold received by them from the temple of Tirumālpēru. In the next year, the *ūrār* of Paḷugūr in Paḷugūr-nāḍu received 60 *kaḷaṇḍu* of gold from the temple of Tirumālpēru and had agreed to measure out 225 *kāḍi* of paddy to the temple.<sup>14</sup>

The *ūrār* themselves had agreed to pound, clean and measure at the courtyard (*tirumurram*) of the temple. Two years later,<sup>15</sup> the *ūrār* of Tirumālpēru received  $15\frac{1}{2}$  *kaḷaṇḷju* of gold from the temple and had agreed to measure out 28 *kāḍi* of paddy to the temple.

During the time of his successor i.e., Rājendra I<sup>16</sup> in the 21st year of his reign, the *sabhā* of Puduppākkam in Purisai-nāḍu, in Maṇayil-kōṭṭam had sold the tax free *dēvadāṇa* land of 2750 *kulī* to the temple of Tirumālpēr-uḍaiyār, against a sum of 30 *kaḷaṇḷju* of gold. But the land was not utilised for any services for a longtime till about the 21st (1033 A.D.) regnal year of this king. The *peruṇiguri-sabhā* of Nittavinōḍa-vaḷanāḍu sold two villages in the next year as *śālābhōga* to the temple at Tirmālpēru in *lieiu* of 6300 *kāśu* by Kōvaṇ Kumaraṇ *alias* Daṇḍanāyaka Madurāntaka-vēḷāṇ, an army official who was a native of Marudāḍu in Veṇkunṇak-kōṭṭam. In 1042 A.D. <sup>18</sup> another official Sōman Kumaraṇ *alias* Madurāntaka-mārāyaṇ purchased 3000 *kulī* of land from the *sabhā* of Kūram *alias* Śōlmārttāṇḍa-chaturvēdi-maṅgalam for 36 *rājarāja-kāśu* and endowed it to the temple to provide for 75 *kalasam* paddy to meet the expenses of the daily supply of *tumbai* flowers for the god, and to feed two *Śivayōgins* in the temple. The *sabhā* under took the responsibility of remitting taxes such as *pudarpon-paṇchavāram*, *sillirai*, *echchōru* and other taxes.

The temple has no records of Rājendrachōḷa I's successors till the time of Kulōttuṅga I. In the 26th regnal year<sup>19</sup> of Kulōttuṅga I (1097 A.D.) one Nambaṇ Madhurāntakavēḷāṇ *alias* Kulōttuṅgachōḷa Virai-nāṭṭu-mūvēṇḍavēḷār of Paṭṭikuḍi purchased some pieces of land measuring 1600 *kulī* from several individuals. The *ūrār* of the *dēvadāṇa* village, Tirumārpēru in Valla-nāḍu agreed to exempt *kaḍamai* taxes and also the *kuḍaimai* dues on the *dēvadāṇa* lands. In the same year,<sup>20</sup> (1097 A.D.) the temple authorities sold 1969 *kulī* of land at *Sirriyārrūr*, a *dēvadāṇa* in Purisai-nāḍu for a sum of ten *kāśu* to an individual Paṭṭukkuḍaiyāṇ Tumbaṇ Madhurāntakadēvaṇ *alias* Kulōttuṅgachōḷa Viraināṭṭu-mūvēṇḍavēḷāṇ who endowed it to the same temple for making a flower garden (*tirunandavanam*). In 1111 A.D.,<sup>21</sup> the *ūrār* sold 6,700 *kulī* of land as *ūrkal-iraiyilli* in addition to another plot of waste land which was sold as

*kuḍiyiruppu* (house site) by the *ūrār* of Nittavinōdanallūr in Dāmar-nāḍu, in Jayaṅḡḡa-chōḷamaṇḍalam for 20 *kāśu* to one Kūttāḍi-Śīrūḍaikkalāḷ *alias* Chōḷappallavaraiyaṅ of Nāgambāḍi in Maḷa-nāḍu in Chōḷa-maṇḍalam for the maintenance of a *maṭha*, established by him in the *tirumaḍaiviḷagam* of the temple at Tirumālpēru under the management of a *tapasvin* called Anbarkkarai sāṇḍai. In 1125 A.D. of Vikramachōḷa, the successor of Kulōttuṅga in a sale of 6000 *kuḷi* out of their common land was made to the temple of Tirumārpēr-udaiyār, by the *ūrār* of Siriyarūr, a *dēvadāna* village, for 20 *kāśu*. The tax amount had been remitted on behalf of the temple by one Uttamachōḷaṅ Ponnambalakkūttan *alias* Kaṇṇagadaraiyaṅ. Half of this land is said to be in favour of the god Uttamachōḷīśvaram-udaiyār Avimuttiśvaram-udaiyār in the temple. The income from land was to meet the requirements of worship in the temple. It was let on lease by the temple to one Taluvakkulaṅja-Pichchar of Tiruvēgambam-udaiyār temple. The donor Kaṇṇagadaraiyar is stated to have made further gift of about 138 *kalaṅju* of gold for ornaments to the god. In 1212 A.D., the king (Kulōttuṅga III) issued order at the request of Chēdirāyaṅ granting ninety-six *vēli* of tax-free at Vadiyūr for requirements of worship of god Uttamachōḷīśvaram-udaiyār which was consecrated by the chief Chēdirāyaṅ in the temple of Tirumārpēru-udaiyār. This was to take effect from the 34th regnal year. And the royal order was attested by many officials. During Rājarāja III's reign, the Śiva temple received gifts of cows from philanthropic donors for burning perpetual lamps in the temple. In 1241 A.D.<sup>25</sup> i.e. during the 15th regnal year of Rājarāja III Araiyaṅ Nīraṇḍāṅ Chēdirāyaṅ of Panāṅkuḍi, an agent of Siyaṅ Sambuvaraayan donated 64 cows to burn two perpetual lamps.

### Vishṇu temple

The earliest inscription in the Vishṇu temple belongs to Parāntaka I's reign. In 938 A.D.,<sup>27</sup> Amanimādeviyār, the queen of Parāntaka I, made a gift of a perpetual lamp to the deity at Gōvindappāḍi in Valla-nāḍu on behalf of her elder sister Kambaṅ Guṇakānta. The donor is also called Rāsiṅgam, a native of Poliyūr in Poliyūr-nāḍu, a division of Pāṇḍi-maṇḍalam. In the same year king Parāntaka donated

some silver vessels on the day of solar eclipse when he paid a visit to the temple. In 941 A.D.<sup>29</sup> a general of the king, Māraṇ Paramēśvaraṇ a resident of Sirukulattūr donated 96 sheep for a lamp to the deity Gōvindappāḍi-Ālyār. The donor made this gift on his way to the Chōla capital, Thanjavūr after conquering Sītpuli and Nellore. In 938 A.D.<sup>30</sup> the Chōla queen Amudaṇ-perrāl *alias* Pallavaṇmādēviyar made a gift of lamp. Again in 941 A.D.,<sup>31</sup> the official Oḷukkai Vīraṇārāyaṇaṇ *alias* Anantavikrama. Pallavaraiyar, donated 30 *poṇ* for making a crown to the image of the god Gōvindappāḍi-perumāṇaḍigaḷ. In 946 A.D.<sup>32</sup> Karraḷi Māyilaṭṭi Nīlakaṇṭaṇ, a merchant of Korraṇmāvalampāḍi in Kachchippēḍu sold 12 *patti* tax-free garden land at Piḍāriyār Kulattūr to the temple of Paramasvāmi at Gōvindappāḍi in Valla-nāḍu. Prince Uttamaśīliyār,<sup>33</sup> the son of Parāntaka I made an endowment of 27 *kaḷaṇju* of gold for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple at Gōvindappāḍi. In the 13th regnal year of Pārthivēndravarmaṇ an endowment of 2000 *kul* of land at Siriyāṇṭūr in Mēlpalugur-nāḍu was made by Maṇṇaṇ Kaṇṇaṇ *alias* Kāmarmōha-vāraṇappēraraiyaṇ the elephant mahout of the king.<sup>34</sup> He made this gift to feed the brāhmaṇas daily in the *maṭha* attached to the temple. He purchased the land from the temple itself. In the third regnal year of Rājarāja I<sup>35</sup>, a *vellāla* made a gift for burning a lamp to the deity Kamsāri i.e. Kṛishṇa at Gōvindappāḍi. In 995 A.D. Aruṇilai Śrī-Kṛishṇa *alias* Mūvēnda Piḍavūr-veḷār, the accountant of Piḍavūr-nāḍu in Chōla-nāḍu donated 29 *kaḷaṇju* of gold which was invested with the *ūrār* of Vēḷkaḷavenpākkam adjacent to Gōvindappāḍi. The three *kaḷaṇju* collected from them as interest every year was to be utilised i.e., 2 *kaḷaṇju* for the singers who recited the *Tiruppadiyam*, *Kōlanarkuḷal* composed by the donor's father Kāyavān Aruṇilai on the seventh day of the annual festival in the temple and another 1 *kaḷaṇju* to the priests who had made arrangements.<sup>36</sup> In the next year i.e. 996 A.D. a merchant Māyilaṭṭi<sup>37</sup> Veṅkaḍaṇ of Paṭṭam in Āvūr-kūrṇam in Chōla-nāḍu made an endowment for burning a lamp before the image of Anumadēvar (Hanumadēvan) set up by him at Gōvindappāḍi. The donor is also stated to have endowed ten *kaḷaṇju* of gold left in charge of the *ūrār* of Vēḷkaḷavenpākkam to provide for the daily offerings to

the same deity. In 1004 A.D.<sup>38</sup> during the 19th regnal year of Rājarāja I an individual Kaḍambaṇ Venkāḍaṇ a *vellāḷa* resident of Nallūr-Pudukkuḍi in Chōḷa-maṇḍalam reclaimed and brought under cultivation by his own efforts 1000 *kulī* of tax-paying land at Śirriyāṇṇūr belonging to the temple of Gōvindapāḍi-perumāṇaḍigal. The land had been filled with sand on account of a breach in the Pālār river. He was helped in this venture by additional allotment of temple lands adjoining the above with irrigational facilities. Kaḍambaṇ Venkāḍaṇ then re-endowed the whole plot of land. The donor then purchased 1150 *kulī* of tax-free land from the *ūrār* of Venbākkam for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple. In the third regnal year<sup>39</sup> of Rājendra Chōḷa I (1015 A.D.) an endowment of 21 *kaḷaṇṇu* of gold to the temple at Gōvindappāḍi in Valla-nāḍu was made by an individual Kōḍaṇ Nambaṇ Nattagāḍi *alias* Uttamachōḷa Brahma-vaḷavaraiyan of Aruvēḷūr in Chōḷa-maṇḍalam for feeding the Śrīvaiṣṇavas on all these days of the festival in Chittirai month in the temple.

During the 32nd regnal year<sup>40</sup> of Rājādhirāja I (1050 A.D.) the *ūrār* of Amaṇpākkam in Paḷukūr-nāḍu sold a piece of land in favour of the god Uyyakonḍāḷyār at Gōvindappāḍi. It is mentioned that a lady Vīmaṇ Toṇḍi consecrated a silver image called Uyyakonḍāḷyār at Gōvindappāḍi.

The above study of inscriptions reveal that both the Śīva and Viṣṇu temples were patronised during the Chōḷa period. It appears that the early Chōḷa rulers favoured Viṣṇu temples. In other words though they were ardent Śaivites they were not influenced by any narrow sectarian interests. Inscriptions of Parāntaka I and Sundarachōḷa point out their endowments to Viṣṇu temples. The king seems to have visited the Viṣṇu temple at Tirumālpuram to receive his triumphant general after the victory over Nellore.

Interestingly the Śīva temple was patronised by the Chōḷas starting from Rājarāja I. The advent of Rājarāja I ushered a new era in the history and development of Śaivism.

It is interesting to note that none of the Chōḷa emperors starting from Rājarāja I made many gifts to Viṣṇu temples which was favoured mostly by common folk. Rājarāja I's and his successor's predilection towards Śaivism is too well-known to be explained at length.

The Śiva temple received land grants from the time of Āditya I. When the *sabhā* of Puduppākkam misappropriated the *kāṇi* of an individual and withheld the revenue to be paid to the temple, the temple authorities did not hesitate to bring it to the notice of the king who ordered the return of the proceeds to the temple treasury and this suggests the control of the Chōla rulers over the local administration and the temple management.

In course of time things changed. In the 12th year of Rājarāja I, Madurāntakan Gaṇḍarādittan, the auditing official discovered that the property of god Agniśvara was misappropriated by the temple staff for their own use and daily food offerings to the deity was diminished. The erring officers were punished and fined and the misappropriated 2 1/2 *vēlis* were resumed and with that a new service was instituted in the temple.

It is not known why the nearby Viṣṇu temple was not subject to scrutiny. In fact the royal official Madhurāntakan Gaṇḍarādittan was conspicuous by his absence in any of the records of Viṣṇu temple. Probably because the Śiva temple possessed large property and had been receiving grants since the time of Āditya I and its mismanagement became evident that warranted the scrutiny. Besides the Śiva temple was more popular while the Viṣṇu temple was exclusively patronised by the people.

The temple was popular throughout Chōla rule and donors belonged to various strata of the society. In one inscription from the Śiva temple one *vaikhānasa* (*Vaishṇava*) figures as a signatory. The presence of the *Vaishṇava* in the Tirumālpuram village is significant to note when it is seen that it was a Vaikhānasa entitled Kūṭṭattan Nārpattiruvan who was asked to record a transaction concerning the Śiva temple in the same village. It suggests the catholicity of the society at that time.

The Tirumālpuram temples in the Chōla period served not only as a place of worship but also functioned as economic corporations. When the township of Tirumālpuram was established, large areas of land were set apart for the temples. The temple in turn sold them to philanthropic donors who paid not only price-money but also the tax-money. The donors purchased them, reclaimed and returned the same to

the temple which instituted some services on behalf of the donors. The temple received not only the land back, but also its price and tax-amount. In one case we noticed that as a result of breach in the Pālār river the lands owned by the Vishṇu temple was covered with sand. The temple was placed in an unenviable position as it had to pay taxes for this unproductive land. An enterprising individual came forward, exerted himself, reclaimed it and brought them under cultivation and donated back to the temple for providing food offerings.

The local assemblies in and around this township established close contact with the temple. In fact the temple was an important limb of the local organisation. We have seen above that several local assemblies received gold or grain from the donors. The temples not only performed the mere functions of receiving gifts from the devotees but also saw to it that suitable investments were made out of them so as to ensure a good return in cash or kind for the uninterrupted performance of various religious services in the temple most of which were instituted by the donors themselves. The *sabhā* invested the amount of donations or gifts in some productive enterprises and the returns or the interest which accrued as a result of the investment was utilised for the stipulated endowments. Some of the records of the Śiva temple reveal that the money was deposited with the residents of the village who in turn returned the interest in paddy in the temple and thereby fulfilled the obligations of the donors. We have noted above when the land owned by the Vishṇu temple became fallow and filled with sand on account of a breach in the Pālār, an individual came forward to reclaim the land. The temple authorities not only permitted the above individual in this venture but also provided additional lands for irrigational facilities. Both the temples had a large retinue of servants and employees on its roll and the number and magnificence of the various services depended upon the reliable income which resulted from the profitable investment of endowed funds. Hence the growth of these temples was closely associated with and dependent upon the programme of agricultural development in and around Tirumālpuram. The Tirumālpuram inscriptions are also useful for the study of cultural history too. To cite an instance in an inscription of Vishṇu temple, it is mentioned that an

endowment has been created by Arunilai Śrī-Kṛishṇa *alias* Mūvēnda Piḍavūrvelār, the accountant of Piḍavūr-nāḍu to recite the *tiruppadiyam* beginning with *kōlanarkulal* composed by the donor's father. Kāyavan Arunilai on the seventh day of the festival. As this hymn is not found in any of the Vaishṇava literature, it might have been composed by the above person. M. Raghava Aiyangar, who examined this record has opined that those temples which were not sung by Ālyārs and Nāyanmārs were sung later on during the reign of Rājarāja I by the learned devotees.

To conclude, both the Śiva and Viṣṇu temples played important roles in the contemporary society. The temple need not be considered only as an economic conduit. The most important point to be emphasised here is that the numerous services on the occasion of worship in the temple might have attracted a large number of devotees, thus proliferating an immeasurable amount of religious fervour centering around the local deities. There are a number of instances whereby itinerant Vēdic scholars were fed on the occasion of midday service in several centres, obviously in return for the recital of *Vēdas* on important occasions for the general welfare of the entire society.<sup>41</sup>

### Notes and References

1. Sambandar's *Iēvāram*
2. *SII.*, Vol. XXII, No. 286
3. *Ibid.*, No. 298
4. *Ibid.*, Nos. 300-338
5. Appar's *Dēvāram*
6. *Tiruvāśagam Tiruchchāl.*
7. *SII.*, Vol. No. XXII No. 340.
8. The Viṣṇu temple is now called Kōnār temple probably because the shepherds (*kōnār*) worshipped their deity Lord Kṛishṇa.
9. *SII.*, Vol. XXII, No. 266.
10. *Ibid.*, No. 286.
- 10a. 10 A. *SII* Vol. XIX No. 341
- 10b. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII No. 31
11. *Ibid.*, XXII, No. 265
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31. *Ibid.*, No. 311
32. *Ibid.*, No. 341
33. *Ibid.*, No. 301
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35. *Ibid.*, Vol XIII, No. 34
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# Ancient Tamil Monarchy and the Sētupati Kings

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TAMIL SCHOLARS as well as historians have dwelt at length on the subject of Tamil monarchy, i.e., Chēra, Chōla, and Pāṇḍya dynsties. The Sētupati royal house-hold was the only Tamil royalty which ruled some parts of Tamil Nāḍu after the decline of the Tamil monarchy. It will be impossible to conduct research on the Tamil royalty, if the contributions as well as the achievements of Sētupatis are not taken into account. In this article an attempt is made to identify the caste affiliation of the Tamil monarchy, taking into consideration the facts gleaned from the royal charters of the Sētupati kings as primary source materials. Some other inscriptional and literary references are also used as corroborative evidences.

Many articles and books have been written by scholars on the Sētupatis, the Maṇavar leaders of the Sētu country.<sup>1</sup> But it seems that no concrete evidences has been cited either to prove or disprove whether these Sētupati kings descended from the Chēra, Chōla and Pāṇḍya nobility. Recently, compilations of deciphered copper plate inscriptions issued by the Sētupati kings have been brought out with appropriate interpretations by two scholars namely S. Raju and S.M. Kamal.<sup>2</sup> These copper-plate charters are of inestimable value, as they were legitimate social documents.

## **Enemies of the Solar and Lunar Races**

The ancient Tamil kings continuously and consistently claimed their descent from the heroes of the Solar and Lunar races.<sup>3</sup> Even if we discount the stories of their mythical origin, we have to accept the fact that there was a method in the madness. The imperial Chōlas and Pāṇḍyas who boasted as the heirs of the Solar and Lunar races respectively were never inconsistent in the details that they provide while

eulogising their ancestors. In the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. when the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍyas fought among themselves, they used the Mahābali Vāṇādirāya cheiftains as pawns in their political intrigues.<sup>4</sup> But this strategy of the Tamil monarchy back-fired and as a result Mahābali Vāṇādirāyars captured the capitals of the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya dynasties and established their unquestioned supremacy.<sup>5</sup> The Chōḷas faded from the political scene and the humiliated Pāṇḍyas lingered on and shifted from Madurai, establishing a new capital at Tenkāśi in the Tirunelvēli region. The Mahābali Vāṇādirāyā called themselves as Rājakuḷasarpa-garudaṇ (kite to the serpent of royalty. i.e., Kshatriyās). These Mahābali Vāṇādirāyās who claimed their descent from the Aśura chief Mahābali had the title "Maṛattiru" the "Maṛavaṇ", "Rākshasaṇ" etc., and ruled the Pāṇḍya country in the 15th and the 16th centuries.<sup>6</sup> Literary works as well as inscriptions belonging to this period attest to the fact that 'Maṛavars, captured Madurai from the Pāṇḍya kings.

The Sētopati cheiftains who ascended the political horizon in the beginning of the 17th century,<sup>7</sup> prominently displayed their titles like "Araśa Rāvaṇa Rāmaṇ" (Rāma to the Rāvaṇas called kings<sup>8</sup>) "Araśar Āṭṭam Tavirttāṇ"<sup>9</sup> (one who stopped the royal show of kings) and "Indu-kula-sarpa-garudaṇ"<sup>10</sup> (Garuda to the cobra called the kings of the Lunar race, i.e., the Pāṇḍyas. It is to be noticed here that the Maṛavars refused to give their girls in marriage to the Pāṇḍya royalty in this period. According to the versions of Naḍuvakurichi<sup>11</sup> and Ūttumalai<sup>12</sup> Maṛavar pālēgārs, the Pāṇḍyas belonged to the Lunar race and the concerned pālēgārs belonged to the Maṛavar race. Numerous references occur in the literary works and occasional songs belonging to that period, concerning such refusal on the part of the Maṛavars to the marital proposals sent by the royalty.<sup>13</sup>

Another prominent title borne by the Sētopati in their charters was "Vaigai-valanāḍan-kottam-aḍakki"<sup>14</sup> (he who suppressed the valour (*korram*) of the Pāṇḍyas). Gradually in addition to this title, the Sētopati started using the title Madurairāyaṇ<sup>15</sup>. This title which is similar to the title *Mādurāpurī-mahānāyagan* borne by the Vāṇādirāyar chief in the 15th-16th centuries<sup>16</sup> seems to be at variance with their

other titles like *Maduraiyar āpatsahāyaṇ*<sup>17</sup> (Saviour of Madurai kings) and *Maduraiyar-māṇam-kāttāṇ*<sup>18</sup> (he who protected the honour of the Madurai kings) borne by them in their later charters. But we have to remember that the Nāyaka have established themselves as the kings of Madurai in the 16th century A.D., only with the support of the Maravars and the indispensability of the Maravars in the political power structure of the poligary system that was introduced by the Nāyaks of Madurai is reflected in these titles. This indispensability led to the entrenchment of Maravars in the socio-political environment in Madurai and as a result, the Sētupatis started using the title *Vaigai-vaṇanāḍaṇ* in the year 1661 A.D.<sup>19</sup> and 1750 A.D.<sup>20</sup> Probably the vaccum created by the *Vaigai-vaṇanāḍaṇ* for a brief while. Similar to the title *Vaigai-vaṇanāḍaṇ* the Sētupati kings started using the titles *Sembināḍaṇ*<sup>21</sup> and *Sembi-vaṇanāḍaṇ*<sup>22</sup> in the years 1755 A.D. and 1782 A.D. respectively. It is hoped that it will not be considered as a speculation if we come to the conclusion that the complete fading away of the Tenkāśi Pāṇḍya kings from the political scenario in the year 1754 A.D. and the total vaccum created by the downfall of the Madurai Nāyak kingdom in the year 1735 A.D. led to the independence as well as socio-political supremacy of the Maravars<sup>23</sup> and led the Sētupati kings to usurp the title *nāḍaṇ* used as the caste title by the Nāḍār community people who claimed to belong to the solar and Lunar races.<sup>24</sup> It is pertinent to notice here that the Sētupati kings issued a copper-plate grant to one Aṭṭami-nāḍaṇ (who belonged to the Nāḍār caste) as a *Sētupaṭṭayam* (Caste title deed) in the year 1754 A.D. In this grant the usual high sounding titles of the Sētupati kings are absent. Especially the titles *Vaigai-vaṇanāḍaṇ*, *Vaigai vaṇanāḍaṇ-kottam-aḍakki Jāti* and the like are not mentioned in this copper-plate grant.<sup>25</sup>

The Sētupāti kings originally had only the 'Anumakkodi'<sup>26</sup> (flag having the figure of Hanuman, the monkey god) and this has been mentioned in their first copper-plate grant. This fact has been endorsed by the compiler of *Abhidāna Chintāmaṇi*, A. Singaravēlu Mudaliyār who was patronised by the Maravar Zamindar of Pālavanattam Pāṇḍitturai Tēvar<sup>27</sup>. At times they claim to have Garuḍakkodi also<sup>27a</sup>. But in

their later copper-plate grants, the Sētopati kings claim to have Sēvarṇkoḍi<sup>28</sup> (flag having the figure cock), and ultimately 'Mīnakkoḍi'<sup>29</sup> (flag having the figure 'fish') and Pulikkkoḍi<sup>30</sup> (flag having the figure tiger), the royal emblems of the Pāṇḍyas and the Chōlas. Though the Sētopati kings claimed to have subdued the entire country and engraved their royal emblem on the Mount Mēru like the early Pāṇḍyas and Chōla kings<sup>31</sup>, they did not claim to have used the fish or the tiger emblem for that purpose. Instead they boast, that they engraved the figure of the boomerang *valaikunil* or *valaitaḍi* or *vaḷari*)<sup>32</sup> the typical weapon of Maṇavars, on the Mount Mēru.

It is true that the Sētopati kings in some of their copper-plate grants call themselves as *Ravikulasēkaran*<sup>33</sup> *Ravi Mārtāṇḍan*<sup>34</sup>, *Ravivarmaṇ*<sup>35</sup> and *Ravikula Sētopati*<sup>36</sup>. In some later copper-plate grants belonging to the 18th century A.D., they call themselves as *Maṇunṭimaṇan*<sup>37</sup> and *Maṇunṭhi Chōlan*<sup>38</sup>. One copper-plate grant starts with the word *Sūriyaṇ Svasti śrī*. But contrary to all those titles one copper plate grant applies the title *Ravivarmakaṇḍan*<sup>39</sup> (destroyer of Ravivarmaṇ or opponent to the kings of the solar race) to the Sētopati king and another later grant which belongs to the year 1755 A.D., introduces the Sētopati king as one who made the kings of Gōpāla-varṇśa and Sūrya-varṇśa submissive.<sup>40</sup> In the same copper-plate grant the king calls himself as *Ravikula Sūriyan*<sup>41</sup> and *Chōla nittavirāṭa Raṇamukasuddhaviṇan*. In another copper-plate grant belonging to the year 1794 A.D. "*Chandiravaṇkisha Sūriyavaṇkishappiratāpa*" is mentioned as the epithet of the king.<sup>42</sup> We have to probe deep into history for explaining away such inconsistencies. According to the Jesuit Missionary Proenza, the Kshatriyas of the Chōla country who belonged to the noble caste could not withstand the humiliation at the hands of the Bijāpūr Sultan's forces and committed self immolation. Thousands and thousands of such noble caste people died in that holocaust.<sup>43</sup> This happened around 1658-1659 A.D. The correct interpretation of the term "noble caste people" should be *Chāṇṇōr-kulattavar* i.e., *nāḍārs* of the Chōla country. This was the same period when the Sētopati kings started using self contradictory titles cited above. Now it becomes apparent that the Sētopati kings were jubilant about

their achievements of having subdued the ancient Tamil monarchy and this pride is reflected in their title *Mūvarāyagaṇḍan* (destroyer of the Chēra, Chōla and Pāṇḍya kings)<sup>44</sup> This title is quoted invariably in majority of the copper-plate grants issued by the Sētupati kings.

But in the same period that is under discussion, one subject of people belonging to the Nādār caste were consistently and unrelentingly claiming Solar racial origin. They registered themselves as Valaṅgai Uyyakkonḍa Ravikula kshatriyar, in legal documents.<sup>45</sup> Another sect among the Nādār caste people claimed Pāṇḍyakula kshatriyas lineage<sup>46</sup>. But the voice of these people, who were not in a composition in the socio-political power structure of Tamil Nāḍu was submerged in the hue and cry created by the poets who eulogised the Sētupati kings in the *praśasties* of the copper-plate grants and literary works. One such poet, Palapaṭṭāḍai Chokkanāthappulavar by name, portrayed the Sētupati king as the sole representative of the combined genealogy of the Solar race, Lunar race and the race of the river Ganges.<sup>47</sup> But even that poet recognises the fact that the Sētupati kings hailed from the Jeyatuṅga vaṁśam and they took the reins of governing the state after the three Tamil emperors (Chēra, Chōla and Pāṇḍyas) and all other traditional chieftains vanished from the political arena.<sup>48</sup> Though the Sētupatis had become the rulers of the region at their control, they did not claim the white coloured royal parasol (*veṅkorakkōḍai*) as their attribute. Instead they claimed only the saffron coloured parasol (*cheṅkāvikkuḍai*). But there was some people, who though being the subjects of the Sētupati were using the white coloured royal parasol in their paraphernalia and such people had to pay a tax called *Vellaikkudaippaṭṭaiya - vari*<sup>49</sup>. We can find an answer to the caste identity of these people in the social documents of the Chāṇṇōr community people.<sup>50</sup> In these documents it is mentioned that *nādārs* in the region situated on the banks of river Vaigai had the title Mukkaṇḍar in the 16th - 17th centuries. One Dharma Mukkaṇḍar an influential man living in the village Vaigai situated in the Sētu country is mentioned in a copper plate grant issued by the Sētupati king.<sup>51</sup>

The Chātur-varṇa system was in vogue in the regions administered by the Sētupati kings,<sup>52</sup>. Instead of claiming Kshatriya status, the Sētupati kings claimed sūdra (*vellaḷār*)

status only<sup>53</sup>. Having hailed from the Sabara (Eyīnar) race, Sētopati kings were ardent worshippers of Durgā (the destroyer of the buffalow demon)<sup>54</sup>. In one copper plate grant, they proclaim that as long as their reign lasts, they would play a major role in conducting the Paṅguni festival (on the full moon day in the month of Phālgunā) at the Durgā temple at Rāmanāthapuram<sup>55</sup>. It is believed that the Sētopati kings were allowed to conduct Mahānavami festival by Tirumalai- nāyakkar, when they routed the Mysore forces and saved the Madurai Nāyak king's honour in 1656 A.D. It is believed that Tirumalai- nāyakkar presented a golden image of Rājarājēśvarī to the Sētopati king, to be installed at the Rāmanāthapuram palace<sup>56</sup> and special pūjas conducted on the occasion of Mahānavami<sup>57</sup>. This Sētopati king seems to have honoured one Muttuvijayan Chērvaikkāraṇ, a Maṇavar of Peruvāykkōṭṭai with a lion faced palanquin (*siṅgamukat-taṇḍiyal*), lifted his position to that of a lord of the highest rank, superior to all other lords who had the privilege of going on palanquins (*taṇḍiyamār*) and ordered that he would get the first *prasāda* during Mahānavami festival, (Dasara, the festival of Kshatriyas). This Chērvaikkāraṇ seems to have fought against the Kaṇṇaḍigas<sup>57a</sup>, (Mysoreans), who were conducting Mahānavami with pomp and splendour. The palanquin lords of Rāmanāthapuram who were getting the first *prasāda* during Mahānavami, in the earlier period, might have been *nāḍārs*.

### The Title Sētopāti: its Meaning and Import

In some of the copper plate grants, the Sētopati kings claim to belong to the Chētuṅgarāya-vaṁśam<sup>59</sup>. This title can be intepreted in different ways. It may be taken as the corrupt form of the word Jayatuṅga or it can be interpreted as another form of Chēdirāya. This title Chēdirāya is borne by Chērvaikkāra- nāḍārs<sup>60</sup> or sirukuḍi-nāḍārs also. These *nāḍārs* are generally termed as Kaḷlachāṇār. It is not known at present whether the Chēdirāyar subsect of Nāḍārs and the Sētopati subsect of Maṇavars had previous connections.<sup>61</sup> But the title Sētopati did not originally mean any individual but it was the name of the town Rāmēśvaram whence the Sētu or bridge towards Laṅka was built. The word Chēdi has also got the menaing of a bridge. Sētopati simply means the holy place of Sētu.

The title of the first chief Sadaikkattēvan who was rested with the power of protecting Rāmēśvaram, by the Madurai Nāyak ruler Muttu Kṛishṇappa-nāyakkar in the beginning of 17th century A.D. was 'Sētopatikāttatēvar (protector of the coastal town Rāmēśvaram). It is generally believed by historians that Muttu Kṛishṇappa-nāyakkar used the Maṛavar forces to subdue the Tenkāśi Pāṇḍya dynasty. The pearl fishery rights which were jealously possessed by the Pāṇḍya kings were gradually getting transformed to the hands of the Madurai Nāyaks in that period. The help and assistance of the Maṛavar forces might have been crucial in this venture. It seems likely that the titles Tonḍianturaik kāvalan<sup>62</sup> (protector of the port of Tonḍi) and Sētopatikāttatēvar<sup>63</sup> were conferred on the Maṛavar chief Sadaikkat-tēvar by the Nāyak king keeping in view of the above fact. These titles have been continuously used by the Sētopati kings in their copper plate grants. Of these titles, Sētopatikāttatēvar was probably adopted as the Paṭṭābhishēkanāma or coronation title.

The titles 'Sētumūla-rakshā-durandaran', 'Tiruvāṇaikkāvalan' and Tēvaikkāvalan' were possessed by the Mahābali Vāṇādirāyar kings in the 15th and 16th centuries A.D.<sup>64</sup> These titles due to their association with the mythological origin of the Sētu or the bridge built by the monkey brigade had a holy sura around them. It was but natural for the Sētopati kings to have adopted these titles as their own. Previously, Maṛavars who were considered to be the residents of the infertile regions (pālai-nīlam) were not vested with the responsibility of *sthalamkāvaḥ*<sup>65</sup> (protecting civilized and well-settled regions) by the Tamil monarchy. In the 14th century A.D. when the Madurai Sultanate was ruling parts of Tamil country, Maṛavars defeated the Pāṇḍyas and began to rule the region situated between Madurai and Tañjāvūr. Even in the 14th century, Pāṇḍya kings like Parākrama Pāṇḍya seem to have relied in Ravikulamaṇṇaṇ, Raṇavīrapperrumaḷ Gāṅgēyaṇ who belonged to the Solar race, but Sūraikkūḍi Vijayālayatēvan defeated the Gāṅgēyaṇ<sup>66</sup>. The dominance of the Maṛavars continued upto the 16th century A.D. in the above regions and it is mentioned in *Achyutarāya-byudayam*<sup>67</sup> that the Vijayanagar king Achyutarāya defeated the Maṛavar ruler of Madurai. The name of the Maṛavar ruler is

mentioned as Mānabhūpati in the *prasasties* of the Vijayanagar kings of that period. It is apparent that Mānabhūpati is the corrupt form of Vāṇabhūpati<sup>68</sup>. The upward mobility of the Maṇavars probably began in the time of Vāṇātīrāyars and continued afterwards. Some Maṇavars were appointed for watch and ward duty in cities and holy places. The title *Vīrakañchukan*<sup>69</sup>, borne earlier by the Vāṇādirāyars and later adopted by the Sētopatis<sup>70</sup> implied the word Kañchukan was used for a watchman in ancient Tamilnāḍu<sup>71</sup>. But sthālamkāval and pāḍikāval duties were not left in the hands of Maṇavars previously. Even when Vēṅgaimārpan, the Maṇava chief was ruling Kāṇappēr (Kālaiyārkōyil area)<sup>72</sup> and Maṇappōr Akutai<sup>73</sup> who in all probability was the chief of the subsect Akata Maṇavar, was ruling Kūḍal (probably Kūḍalūr) in the Saṅgam period, fertile regions, trading centres and ports in the coastal areas of the Pāṇḍya country were not administered by the Maṇavars.<sup>74</sup> This situation continued upto the 13th century, but was changed by the Vāṇādirāyars<sup>75</sup>. It seems that the Vijayanagar rulers, though they had no intention to interfere in the social affairs of the Pāṇḍya country, thought it politically wise to reaffirm the rights of the Pāṇḍyas in connection with the pearl fishery coast.<sup>75a</sup>

In the later part of 16th century, Aḷaṅṇperumāḷ-Rāman *alias* Śrīvallabha Pāṇḍyan was ruling the South Pāṇḍya country having his headquarters at Tenkāśi. He had some control over the pearl-fishery coast. His predecessors had marital relationship with the family of Achyutarāyar, the Vijayanagar king. It might have been as a result of such close relationship, that Śrīvallabha retained his power, inspite of the presence of Madurai Nāyak in the Pāṇḍya country. A literary work Sivalamāraṇ-katai,<sup>76</sup> written by the court poet of Ativīrarāma Pāṇḍyan by name Chidamabaranātha Kavi in the beginning of 17th century A.D. relates one interesting incident, in detail. Once Sivalamāraṇ (Śrīvallabha Pāṇḍyan or Ativīrarāman) worshipped at the Rāmēśvaram temple and performed *tulābhāra* sacrifice there. The Āryā Brahmins, at that temple shared among themselves the gold weighed, against the weight of Sivalamāraṇ. Sivalamāraṇ got

angry and imprisoned them. The Āryā Brahmins argued that they had the right of possessing the income of the temple and produced a copper plate grant as an evidence in support of their argument. Śīvalamāraṇ verified the document which was said to have been issued by Śrī Rāma himself. After getting convinced of the bonafide credentials of the Āryā Brahmins, Śīvalamāraṇ released them. This incident, though veiled in mythological jargon, seems to have some historical authenticity behind it. The Āryā Brahmins who got legitimacy in the Rāmēśvaram temple affairs probably in the Vijayanagar period, (the 14th - 15th centuries) convinced Śīvalamāraṇ both sentimentally and practically, citing their mythological as well as political connections, towards which Śīvalamāraṇ had high regards.

In the year 1746 A.D.,<sup>77</sup> when Muttukumāra Vijayaragunātha Sētopati was ruling, the same Āryā Brahmins had some dispute with the Gurukkaḷ Mahāsabhā over the ritual authority concerning Lakshmaṇa Tīrtham at Rāmēśvaram<sup>78</sup>. Under instructions from Vijayaragunātha Sētopati, 18 arbitrators (*naḍuvargaḷ*) enquired the case. Though four representatives of the king were present, they did not seem to have participated in the enquiry. All the other persons who served as the arbitrators were non-Maravars, i.e., Brahmins, Vellālas (Pillaimār), Gavara Nāidus, Kōmuti-chettis, Muslim Rāvuttar and one Mayilēri Nāḍaṇ who was a preceptor of martial arts (Uttamappanikkan). The litigation went in favour of the Gurukkaḷ Mahāsabhā, though a copper plate grant which was issued in the year 316 A.D. was also produced while the proceedings were conducted. The year 316 A.D. mentioned as of a previous copper plate grant in this record, seems improbable. If we take it as 1316 and the Śāka era, then it seems to be a probably date, the equivalent of which is 1394 A.D. It would have been a grant issued by one of the Vijayanagar kings.

The main purpose of giving all these details in the paper is to understand that Maravars had no judicial authority over traditional affairs in this holy place for which they claimed to have been the rulers even after adding the name of the place with their comonation titles. But Nāḍār caste people, who were not politically powerful in the 18th century, had the proper 'socio-historical background, that qualified them

for being seated as arbitrators in a case involving people who belonged to the highest social strata. This is not surprising, as the post of *ambalam* (village or caste panchayat chief) was not held by Marāvans previously. Even upto 1696 A.D. Pallar caste people had their own *ambalam*<sup>79</sup> but only after that year, they sold their rights to the Marāvans, and in the 18th century, the dominance of the Marāvans in this region became so absolute, that this region itself attained the nomenclature Maravar-sīmai<sup>80</sup>

### Notes and References

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3. Rājendra Chōla's Tiruvālaṅgāḍu copper plate grant *prasasti* portion; Māvarmaṇ Kulaśekhara Pāṇḍyaṇ meykīrtti.
4. *Pāṇḍyanāṭṭil Vāṇādirāyar* - V. Vedhachalam, "Pāṇanukkuppāṇaṇ aṇṇu pēr Marivara paḍaittennavāṇ kēṭṭa Maturaikoṇḍa tōlvani pāḍiya pāṇanaip Pāṇḍiyaṇ aṇṇu Parumaṇippaṭṭam chūṭṭi" - *prasasti* of the Chōlas. Māvarmaṇ Sundara Pāṇḍyaṇ crowned, the Vāṇādirāya chief as the Chōla king.
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15. "Mam̃ar Salābam Seppēḍu", 1625 A.D., p.20, in *Sēthupathi Seppēḍugal*.
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17. "Rāmanāthapuram Seppēḍu", 1711 A.D., p.235, in *Sēthupathi Seppēḍugal*.
18. "Mam̃ar Salābam Seppēḍu", 1714 A.D., p.254, in *Sēthupathi Seppēḍugal*.
19. "Tirupperunturai Seppēḍu", 1661 A.D., p.86, in *Sēthupathi Seppēḍugal*.
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22. "Kuḷappatti Seppēḍu", 1782 A.D., p.499, in *Sēthupathi Seppēḍugal*.
23. It was in the year 1756 A.D. that the Māṇavar forces crowned Vijayakumāra, the heir apparent to the Madurai Nāyak line at Madurai - see "Veḷḷikkurichchiyin Varalāṇu", paper published by M. Manoharan, Sivagangai.
24. The title Nāḍan, which was usually borne by the kings and the nobility in the Saṅgam period (i.e. Malai-nāḍan-tiyyōḍu viḷaṅgum-nāḍan-kāvirināḍan, etc.) has been used as a caste title by the Chāṇṇōr (nāḍar) community people in many inscriptions like the Avalpūnturai copper plate grants which belongs to the 16th-17th centuries A.D. Some of these inscriptions have been published by S.D. Nellai Nedumaran and S. Ramachandran.
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28. "Ilarnanūr Seppēḍu" 1671 A.D., p.115, in *Sēthupathi Seppēḍugal*.
29. "Kōṭṭaikudi Seppēḍu," 1711 A.D., "Pālkuḷam Seppēḍu," 1722 A.D., pp. 241, 284.
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31. "Rāmanāthapuram Seppēḍu", 1641 A.D., page 47, Mukilattagam Seppēḍu" 1648 A.D., p.50, "Ānandūr Seppēḍu", 1677 A.D., p.99.
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33. "Rāmēswaram Seppēḍu" 1658 A.D., p.65.
34. "Rāmēswaram Seppēḍu" 1658 A.D., p.69.
35. "Rāmēswaram Seppēḍu" 1658 A.D., p.65.
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38. "Sēranthai Seppēḍu" 1733 A.D., p.340.
39. "Peruṅkarai Attālai Chokkanātha Svāmi Tirukkōyil Teyvarāyar Maḍam Seppēḍu" 1671 A.D., p.235, by Dr. S.M. Kamal in *Sēthupathi Maṇṇar Seppēḍugal*, 1992.
40. "Gōpālavaṅgisam Sūriyavaṅgisam ēval seyvittu irundaruḷinān" in "*Sāruvūranēndal Seppēḍu*", 1755 A.D., p.416.
41. *Ibid.*, p.416.
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43. "Tamiḷagam in the 17th century" by R.Sathiyantha Aiyar, Annamalai University, 1956.
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45. *Travancore State Manual*, by Nagamayya, Akiltiraṭṭu, Ammānai, written by Muthukkuṭṭi Svāmi of Sāmittōppu, near Kaniyākumari in the year 1829 A.D. This fact has been discussed in a paper titled Valaṅgai Uyyakkonḍār by S.D. Nellai Nedumāran 1996, Mysore.
46. See S.D. Nellai Nedumāran, *T.D.M.N.S. College Magazine*, Valliyur, 1997, Sringeri mutt copper-plate.
47. "Matiyin, marapum, Iravi maravum, Natiyin marapum oru marapāy vantōn, in Paṇaviḍu tūtu, verse 302.

48. "Mūvēntarum aru saṅgamum pōy patinmūṇṛōḍu eṭṭuk-kōvēntarum aru vēṛōr vēntan koḍaiyumaruṇ-pāvēntar kārūil ilavam pañchāy- prākkaiyilē tēvēntire tāru-ottāy Ragunātha cheyatunganē, verse.
49. "Chūḍiyūrcheppēḍu" deciphered by V. Vedachalam, published in *Maruḍupandiya Mannarkal* by M.Manoharan. In a copper plate inscription from Chēṭapaṭṭi, belonging to 17th-18th centuries, Maṇavars having the saffron coloured parasol claim to have vanquished the Chōlas. (*Chēṭapaṭṭi Cheppēḍu*- M.Chandramūrthi in *Kalvetṭu* - Journal No. 49, Department of Archaeology.
50. "Avalpūnturāi copper plate", deciphered by S.D. Nellai Nedumaran and S. Ramachandran.
51. "Panayankāl Seppēḍu 1729 A.D., p.306. Please see the Editor's note in p. 302.
52. "Chakkaṅguḍi Seppēḍu" - 1715, A.D., pp.275-76.
53. Paṇaviṭutūtu - verses 237 to 277. Editor : R. Nirmalādēvi, World Tamil Research Institute, Chennai, 1980.
54. Please see Editors note in p. 366, *Sēthupathi Seppēḍukaḷ* by S. Raju.
55. "Allikalam Seppēḍu" - 1659 A.D., p.76.
56. *Sēthupathi Seppēḍukaḷ* by S. Raju, p.366.
57. "Rāmanāthapuram Seppēḍu", 1658 A.D., p.70.
58. Please see the article "Āyutha Pūjai" in the Journal "*Kanaiyāl*" May 1997.
59. "Kottaṅkuḷam Seppēḍu", 1671 A.D. p.116, by S.Raju, Jeyatuṅgarāyar, Virūpāksharāyar, Kṛishṇarāyar vaṁsām - 1727 A.D. (Tērpōki Seppēḍu)
60. "Kīranūr (Āttūr - Thiruchendūr taluk, Tūttukkuḍi district) copper plate" belonging to 19th century A.D., deciphered by Nellai Nedumaran and S.Ramachandran (to be published shortly).
61. According to *Tiruvilaiyāḍarpurāṇam*, one Chēdipar Kōmān who was a hunter chief, and who belonged to the Vanniya Maṇavar sect, fought with the Pāṇḍya king, (verse 2., meykāṭṭitta tiruvilaiyāṭḍal - Vēmparrūrār Tiruvilaiyāḍarpurāṇam.

62. "Mummukāttan Seppēḍu", 1606 A.D., p.3.
63. *Ibid.*
64. V. Vēdachalam *op.cit.*
65. Iḍaṅgai-Valaṅgai Varalāru, pp.51-52, by Vedanēyaga Sastri, GOML, Chennai;  
Mackenzie Manuscripts, Vol.I, pp.200-12, Ed.T.V.Mahalingam, 1975. A. Triennial Catalogue of Tamil manuscripts collected during the years 1943-44; 1946-47 Vol.IX, part VII, G.O.M.L., Chennai.
66. A.R.Ep., 1916, Nos.10, 12-13.
67. Achyutha Rāyābhayudhayam by Rājanātha Dindima - 1:32, (Mahendralōkam maravāya datvā madhyē samikam Madhurān Sashāke).
68. "New light on Vāṇāthirāyars with special reference to a paper on Krishnaṛāyapuram grant" presented by S.Ramachandran at the Epigraphical Society of India. 1993.
69. V. Vēdachalam, *op.cit.*
70. "Kalathur Seppēḍu", 1709 A.D., p.230.
71. Cilappatikāram 26 : 138 ; Maṇimēkalai 25 : 11
72. Puṛaṇānūru - 21.
73. *Ibid.*, 233 : 347.
74. In an Ahanānūru verse, Dhanushkōṭi is mentioned as Tonmutukōṭi and the Pāṇḍya kings with the victorious lance (*ven-vēr-kauriyar*) ruled over that area.
75. Pudukkōṭṭai Inscriptions - 491, 669, 758, 865: The Sūraikkuḍi line of Maṇavar chiefs having the surname Viśayālayadēvar, boasted of having humiliated the Pāṇḍya king, enslaved the Gāṅgēyan and hosted the Mahābali cheif.
- 75a. To ascertain this point, we have to probe about the type of relationship that existed between Pāṇḍyas and Āryachakravartis of Jaffna and the Portuguese intervention in the affairs of the pearl fishery coast at that time.
76. Sīvalamāraṇ katai : Seppēḍu kāṇ Paḍalam - U.V.S. Library, Chennai, 1985.

77. *Rāmēswaram Seppēdu* - 1746 A.D., *Sēthupathi Seppēdukal*, S. Raju, pp. 401-405.
78. Lakshmaṇa Tīrtham is supposed to be one of the holiest places in India. Every Hindu, who wishes to perform the pilgrimage to Vāraṇāsi (Kāśiyāttirai) has to start the pilgrimage after bathing at this ghat and performing the ancestral worship here.
79. This document is mentioned as a province disposal document (*eṅgaḷ rājyam aruṭi sāsanam*) by the Paḷḷars. Two Mukkaṇḍars (Nāḍārs) have signed as witnesses.
80. It will be interesting to notice that even the name of the river Vaigai has been changed as Tēvainadhi in Paṇaviṭutūtu, the implication being that the river had become the possession of Tēvaiyar Kāvalan i.e., the Sēthupathi.

## A Portuguese Inscription from Viceroy's Arch in Goa

Swapna Samel

INSCRIPTIONS are the most trustworthy source of the history. The concept of history has in recent years undergone radical changes. It is no longer a mere narration of ruling dynasties, their warfare, victories and defeats. It is much more embracing as it does all the cultural aspects such as arts, commerce, religion, philosophy, administration and what not.<sup>1</sup> Epigraphy has already come into its own and give typical situation where the inter-relationship of epigraphy and archaeology is typically displayed. Epigraphs serves as the handmaids of literature and history providing credibility for oral tradition and often introduce as well as solve problems which otherwise are liable to be controversial.<sup>2</sup> In this presentation efforts have been made to focus on Portuguese inscription on Viceroy's Arch at Goa.

The area around old Goa extending to 3800 sq. kms. between Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea with the Sawantwadi Ghats and North Canara and Southern boundaries is now known as Goa. The term Goa, derived from 'Gōmanta' referred to in the Bhīṣmaparva of the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>3</sup> *Harivaṃśa* and *Skanda-purāṇa*. In ancient times, this land was known variously as Gōmantāchala, Gōmanta, Gōpakapura and Gōve.<sup>4</sup> According to tradition, Paraśurāma reclaimed this land from the sea and settled the Aryans, who accompanied him on the bank of the river Gōmatī, Māṇḍōvi and the Zuari. Hence, Goa is properly known as Gōwa or Gōva in Marāṭhī. It is known as Gōven and in Konkani Gōem. The Madras Glossary connects it with Sanskrit 'go' meaning a cow, in the sense of cowherd country.<sup>5</sup>

It is learnt that Śilāhāra king Jatiqa, the founder of Kolhāpūr branch of Śilāhāras had acquired the lordship of the Gōmantha Durgā by defeating Gaṅga king Parmādi Narasiṃha sometime during 950 A.D. This is the earliest known record wherein the word Gōmantak appears for the first time. Then there are

many references of various rulers who ruled over Goa till 1510. Goa has a long history going back to the 3rd century B.C., when it formed part of the Mauryan empire. Subsequently, it passed on to the Śātavāhanas to be successively ruled by the Chalukyas of Bādāmi, the Śilāhāras, the Kadambas and Yādavas of Dēvagiri.<sup>6</sup>

For the first time Goa came under the Muslims in 1312 when Mallik Kafūr, the famous general of Ālaūd-Dīn Khilji, after vanquishing the last Yādava king, marched on to Goa and destroyed it.<sup>7</sup> However, in 1412 A.D., Goa was reconquered by Bahamanis and annexed to the kingdom.<sup>8</sup> When this dynasty broke up in 1489 A.D., Goa became part of the territory of the Ādil Shāh rulers of Bijāpūr who made Velha Goa (Old Goa), their second capital. It was during the time of Yusuf 'Ādil Khān', that Goa was conquered by the Portuguese under the generalship of Albuquerque in February 1510 A.D.

The Portuguese conquered Goa in 1510 and made it the capital of their seaborne empire in the east. They had initiated the process of establishing such an empire towards the close of the 15th century. Vascoda-Gama, a nobleman and navigator had set out from Portugal on July 8, 1497 with four ships and 170 men with the purpose of discovering a sea route to India *via* the Cape of Good Hope. He has fulfilled this objective reaching Kapukad, twelve kilometers North of Calicut on Malabar Coast on May 17, 1498. The Portuguese seems to have gathered some information about Goa, its strategic position and commercial importance, years before they took it. There is evidence to show that the Portuguese were invited by some Goan leaders and others to capture it.<sup>9</sup> Finally on 3rd March 1510, Albuquerque took possession of Old Goa from Ismail Ādil Shāh, the Sultān of Bijāpūr.

In the span of about thousand years, beginning from the ninth century, the rulers embellished Goa with temples, mosques and churches. A lot of public and private buildings were erected by the Portuguese. The wide moat was filled up and the city began to grow with beautiful churches, monuments and buildings. We can clearly see the impact of Renaissance movement on the constructions in Goa. The architects responsible for the construction of the churches at Old Goa looked for inspiration to the Italian architects, some of whom were among the Jesuits who had come to Goa.<sup>10</sup>

Along the river Maṇḍōvi, not far from the Cathedral of Goa, is the Arch of Viceroys. It is situated at a little distance from the modern jetty at Old Goa which was also the landing place of the old capital city and was its main entrance. It was decorated on the occasion of the entry of every new Viceroy and is called Arch of Viceroy's or Arco dos Vicerays. It was built in black stone by the order of the Senate of Goa as a Centennial Memorial to Vasco-da-Gama for his discovery of the sea route to India, under orders of Governor Francisco-da-Gama (1597-1600) who was the grandson of Vasco-da-Gama.<sup>11</sup>

This monument belongs to the Manueline style as it is closely related to the period of the Portuguese overseas discoveries and conquest. It was planned by the Engineer Julio Simao whose name is associated with the Cathedral Sec of Goa and other monuments.<sup>12</sup> The custom of having a gateway with arched opening on important routes or to commemorate a certain historical events, was the creation of the Roman. It was known as the 'Triumphal Arch'; very often these Triumphal Arches had niches with statues. This type of gateways was built from 2nd century B.C. onwards. Later they were incorporated in the Churches facade. They were built again in all countries from the Renaissance period onwards.<sup>13</sup>

The Arch is facing the Maṇḍōvi river and it is made of granite. In the centre of the frieze there is a niche wherein a marble statue of Vasco-da-Gama is placed. The monument ends with frontage at whose base there is an inscription in Portuguese which reads:

*Reinado E : R.D: Phelipe/pos a cidade aqul Dom Vasco-da-Gama I Conde Almirante descobridor a Conqulstador da India Sendo Vicerolo Conde Dom Francisco da Gama sea Bisneto no ano de 99"*

Means-

During the reign of King Philip I, the city placed here Dom Vasco da Gama, the first admiral, discoverer and conqueror of India, during the Viceroyalty of Count Francisco-da-Gama his great grandson in the year 1599.

Francisco-da-Gama (1597-1600) was the Governor of Goa, who was the grandson of Vasco-da-Gama. The foundation of the monument was celebrated with great pomp. The famous

Portuguese chronicler Diogo da Couto, author of *Decadas da Asia* participated in it. In the niche at the top of the Arch there is statue of Vasco-da-Gama and on the rear is a statue of Argonaul. The Arch was completely renovated in 1954 retaining the statue of Vasco-da-Gama.<sup>14</sup>

The epigraphs under reference itself is a source material for History of Goa under Portuguese. Though ample references are available in literary form one cannot neglect the importance of inscriptions since it is a primary source material of history. Secondly, inscriptions, specially this inscription on Viceroy's Arch gives instant information to general public who may not go to historical records about Vasco-da-Gama and his grandson Governor Francisco-da-Gama. Historically speaking, this inscription is of great importance as it brings to light information, through which is recorded the contemporary document; this epigraph provides first-hand source material and definite valuable data, throwing welcome light on Portuguese ruler in Goa.

This inscription also focuses on the important fact that the language which is used in inscription is not in any regional language but it is of the Portuguese who were the rulers of the time. Most probably the composers of inscriptional texts were mostly drawn from ruling classes. On the other hand writers might have hailed from any of the prevalent classes or castes.

The inscriptions rich in its cultural and historical aspects serve as a monument - a monument of research and knowledge. Especially the inscriptions on the Viceroys Arch serve the wide spectrum of rulers and help to perpetuate the memory. Modifications were done on the arch, nevertheless, the letters and words remained intact and their inscriptions led to concrete conclusions. And there conclusions depict the different stages in history and endorses the various changes.

Right from time immemorial, inscriptions had its own definite and distinct importance in history. Though, modern methods of engravings came in, the ancient inscriptions as a monument stayed throughout in the human civilizations and especially in case of Portuguese, it is rightly observed that engravings of different times, in different shapes and sizes and contents remained a part of their culture.

We can conclude by saying that, inscriptions depending upon the nature of the information we seek, every section, line or even word of the inscriptional texts, be it invocatory, genealogical, operative or imprecatory reveal the hidden facts of history.<sup>16</sup>

### Notes and References

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2. K.V. Soundara Rajan, *JESI.*, Vol. XI., pp.8-9.
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5. Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 379.
6. *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, part II, pp. 539, 565, 577; C.F. Saldhana, *A Short History of Goa*, pp.19-22.
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# Water Resources and Irrigation in Early Medieval Orissa

*R. C. Misro*

THE EARLY human settlements evolved and developed near water resources. Water resources, either existing in their natural forms or artificially developed by human endeavour, were used variedly for agricultural expansion. Agriculture was the mainstay of Indian economic life. Orissa was no exception. In Orissa, agriculture was the backbone of village economy as it is to-day. A vast majority of her rural population depended on agriculture directly or indirectly. The village economy was, therefore, increasingly agrarian in character. It may not be unreasonable to say that the rural economy of Orissa in the early period was primarily agricultural with land as the chief source of production. Even though we do not get proper epigraphic references regarding the method of cultivation, yet it may be assumed that land was the pivot around which the whole village life revolved. Arable land was generally located near water courses. A.P. Sah<sup>1</sup> rightly points out that in the beginning both settlements and agriculture followed the courses of the great river system of the State which acted as a powerful fertilising agent of the soil in its neighbourhood. In Orissa, the soil was fertile and the climate was salubrious which encouraged agriculture. The cultivations of various kinds of agricultural crops greatly depended on good rainfall, favourable climatic conditions and also on irrigation facilities. In this paper an attempt has been made to focus on the water resources and the irrigation system that prevailed in early Orissa during the period under review.

In Orissa, agriculture largely depended on rainfall. Besides rain water, agriculture depended on irrigation also. The source of production was land and its ploughing. For the supply of water to cultivable land, artificial irrigation facilities were extended by excavating wells, tanks, canals etc. A number of inscriptions<sup>2</sup> of the period support this. Moreover, to safeguard

from the vagaries of monsoon, the rural house-holders might have laid stress on irrigation in early Orissa.

In early medieval Orissa, for the extension of agriculture, the ruling class mostly donated lands and villages to various *Brāhmaṇas* and religious establishments in the forest areas.<sup>3</sup> The spread of rural settlements amidst the forest regions encouraged gradual agrarian expansion. For the expansion of agriculture, water resources were highly essential. In early Orissa, like anywhere else, village settlements grew either on the river banks or near other water resources. These village settlements were created with well-defined boundaries. Most of the epigraphic records of our period refer to the detailed description of the boundaries of a donated village or a plot of land.<sup>4</sup> The boundaries usually included among other natural objects, the rivers, the perennial water channels, the rivulets, the springs, water-falls etc. Thus the majority of the land grants belonging to the period of our study refer to water resources in their boundary descriptions. In addition to natural water resources, we have reference to tanks and ponds, which reflect the human incentives in this regard. That the rural settlements were essentially linked with the agrarian expansion is revealed by the mention of fields, plots of land or cultivable tracts (*khaṇḍa-kshētra*)<sup>5</sup> in the vicinity of water resources. The water resources mentioned in the epigraphic records naturally existed in a physical and social context. For enhancement of production, agrarian expansion with better irrigational facilities seemed highly essential. Irrigation had been an important part of agriculture since early times. It was usually carried out by two systems, *viz.*, natural and artificial of which references are abundant in the epigraphic records of early medieval Orissa.

In early Orissa, the primary concern of the State was to reclaim more and more fallow and waste lands under cultivation. The numerous copper plate grants of the early Eastern Ganga of Kalinga-nagara clearly indicates the State's eagerness to bring more and more uncultivated land in the kingdom under cultivation, which allowed the tenant to enjoy, without paying taxes, a plot of uncultivated land brought by him under cultivation for the first time.<sup>6</sup> These records very often to relating to the grant of rent-free land (*sarva-karāṇa-parihṛitya*), made according to the principle of

*bhūmi-chchhidra*, i.e., the grant of waste or fallow land. For instance, the Urlām plates<sup>7</sup> of Hastivarman of the Eastern Gaṅga family record that the king purchased two and a half ploughs (*hala*) of land in the village of Hoṇḍevāka in the district of Kroshtukuvārtāni from the *agrahārikas* and this place of land was granted in the same village as an *agrahāra* to a *brāhmaṇa*. The gift land was evidently a fallow or waste land which was granted according to the principle of *bhūmi-chchhidra* (*bhū-chchhēdi-kṛitya*).

The Bhauma-Kara copper plate charters give details of the boundaries of the gift land and indicate that most of the cultivable lands were so arranged that water for irrigation was available in plenty to the field. Majority of the villages are found to have been demarcated by the *joṭās* or perennial streams and rivulets. In the copper plate charters of the Bhauma-Kara kings of Orissa (c. 736-940 A.D.), we find the interesting expression *bhūmi-chchhidra-pidhāna-nyāya*, 'the principle of *bhūmi-chchhidra*' or which relates to reclamation of waste and fallow land. According to this principle, a fallow land under cultivation for the first time was entitled to enjoy it without payment of taxes. The practice of granting lands to religious institutions and *brāhmaṇas* called *dēvadāya* and *brahmadēya* respectively, according to the principle of *bhūmi-chchhidra* was prevalent in early medieval Orissa as is evident from the Bhauma copper plate grants.<sup>8</sup> The learned *brāhmaṇas* and temples and other religious establishments greatly contributed towards the reclamation of fallow and waste lands in early Orissa, because the *brāhmaṇas* and temples of god and goddesses received free gifts of rent-free holdings and subsequently became traditional land holders. Rent-free holdings were also allowed to royal officers and those other than *brāhmaṇas* as well, who also took great interest in the reclamation of fallow lands.

The expression *khila* found mentioned in some Orissan copper plate grants mainly relates to the grant of fallow land and *chīra-khila-sūnya* probably meant the uncultivated waste areas of a newly formed village settlements.<sup>9</sup> The donees of such grants who became landlords had their principle interest in the development of such lands by establishing human settlements, markets etc., and preparing fields for cultivation.

The role of water resources is evident in agrarian expansion. The extension of agriculture to fallow lands chiefly depended on the availability of water resources. Epigraphic records reveal the names of many rivers that flowed in Orissa. Rivers formed important sources for artificial watering of agricultural land, and the rural people definitely exploited such a source for the purposes of irrigation. For instance, the Pherāvā grant<sup>10</sup> of Sāmantavarman, king of Kalinga (cir. 6th-7th century A.D.) refers, among other boundary marks the gift village of Pherāvā in Lauhāsringārā-vishaya, on the east, to the dry (bed of a) river running south and on the west, the river Mēghāvatī. The Almaṇḍā plates<sup>11</sup> of the early Gaṅga king Anantavarman, dated 802 A.D. show that to the south of a tract of land donated to *brāhmaṇas*, the Chaterā river was flowing. The Taltāli plate<sup>12</sup> of Dharmamahādevī (cir. 9th century A.D.) records the grant of the village Tarātāloi situated in the *vishaya* of Tālamurā along with rights on rivers. The Sāntiragrāma grant<sup>13</sup> of Daṇḍimahādevī (cir. 10th century A.D.) of the Bhauma family mentions that the village called Sāntiragrāma together with another locality called Komyosaṅga was granted with *nadītīrasthāna* (river bank). This proves that there was a river flowing by the side of it. In the Orissa Museum plates<sup>14</sup> of Raṇabhañjadēva (cir. 9th century A.D.), it has been specifically stated that the donated village was washed with the waves of the clear water of the river Morā. The Siṅgharā plates<sup>15</sup> of Rāṇaka Raṇabhañjadēva refer to the gift village Siṅgharā which was situated on the bank of the Bāghī river, which now forms the boundary between the states of Sonapur and Baud. It is known from the Talcher plate<sup>16</sup> of Vinītatuṅga II (cir. 10th-11th century A.D.) that the gift village is stated to have been accompanied by such privilege as *naditarasthāna* (river bank). This shows that a river was flowing nearby the grant village. The Balangir Museum plates<sup>17</sup> of Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti (cir. 10th century A.D.) record the grant of a piece of land which was situated on the northern part of the village of Talakajja in the Sānulā-vishaya and included the bed of a river probably named Avariyanadī. D.C. Sircar has identified it with modern Aurāṅ, a feeder of the Mahānadī. The Bālijhari (Narasīnghpur) copper plates<sup>18</sup> of the Sōmavāṁśī ruler

Udyōtakēśarin Mahābhavagupta refer to the gift of the village Koṇṭālaṇḍa in Sarava-Khaṇḍā attached to Airāvata maṇḍala which included among other things half the portion of Mahānadi. The significance of this grant lies in the fact that water right was conferred on the donee only from one side of the river, definitely for irrigation purposes and to have cultivation on the river bed. The Patna copper plate<sup>19</sup> grant of the sixth year of Mahā-Bhagavagupta - I refers to the gift village Vakaveddā in the Oṅgatāta *vishaya* situated on the bank of the river Oṅgā. The Nirākārapur plates<sup>20</sup> of Udayakhēḍi record that the gift village of Pāgadakhēḍo in the Narēdra-*bhōga* was bounded by a river in the east, by the *timirasrōta* (deep stream) in the south-west and to the north-east, the river current. Thus, many such examples could be furnished to show that cultivated land was generally located near water courses. It may, therefore, be suggested that the agriculturists must have made efforts to provide irrigation facilities by exploiting the river water. River was undoubtedly an important source for artificial watering of agricultural land.

Tanks were also used for irrigation. It is interesting to note that majority of the gift lands have been granted with tanks and wells which very often formed the boundary marks, so that irrigation was not a problem for these lands. There were tanks, ponds, stepped- wells and wells which provided not only irrigation facilities but also helped the people to meet other purposes. Moreover, excavations of tanks and wells were regarded as holy and meritorious deed not only by the ruling authorities but also by the rich and privileged classes of the society. The epigraphic records refer to several tanks and wells that were excavated for irrigation and other purposes also. The Achyutapuram plates<sup>21</sup> of the early Gaṅga king Indravarman (*cir.* 7th century A.D.) record the grant of one *hala* of land in a field near *Rājataṭāka* i.e., "the king's tank", the water of which the donee was permitted to utilise for irrigation purposes. The grant was made on the occasion of the consecration of the *taṭāka* (tank) in honour of the king's mother. This tank appears to be distinct from the "king's tank" (*Rājataṭāka*), near which the field was situated. The record also mentions that no one should do any hindrance to the donee, if he opened the sluice (*udakabandha*) of the tank. The above gift land was situated in the village of Siddhārthaka

in the district of Varāhavartāni. However, the inscriptional reference to the existence of "King's tank" (*Rājataṭāka*) shows that the kings were making efforts to provide irrigation facilities to the village lands. Thus State protection of irrigational works is indicated in this inscription, by the caution issued apparently to royal officers, that nobody should cause hindrance to the donee if he opened the sluice (*udakabandha*) of the tank. The Sāntābommāli plates<sup>22</sup> of Indravarman (*cir.* 7th century A.D.) also record the grant of two *halas* of land in the village of Haribhaṭa in the district of Kroshtukavarttāni which was bounded in the north and south by the storm-water channel of the tank called *Kshatriya-taṭāka* and to the west by a well. Thus it also refers to the water-channels dug from these *taṭākas* obviously for irrigation. *Kshatriya-taṭāka* (Kshatriya-tank) may denote that these reservoirs were constructed and owned by the royal family and the *Kshatriya* community. These water reservoirs appear to have been under some kind of control and could not be utilised for irrigation purposes without prior approval. The Tekkāli plates<sup>23</sup> of Dānārṇava's son Indravarman (*cir.* 7th century A.D.) records that the northern boundary of one *hala* of the gift land in the village of Tuṅganā in the Rupyāvati district was marked by the water of the *taṭāka* (tank) of Tuṅganā, flowing out of the Karakhaṇḍi and Brāhmaṇapālāni (canals?) which entered this field until the crop ripens. This possibly means that the donee had the right to draw water from the tank Tuṅganā until the crop ripens. The grant<sup>24</sup> of Netṭabhañjadēva-II - Prīthvī-kalasa (*cir.* 10th-11th century A.D.) mentioned *Raṇabhañja-bandha* as one of the boundaries of a part of the gift village, probably referring to some construction (embankment) in the name of Raṇabhañja probably Rāṇaka Raṇabhañja, the great grand father of Netṭabhañja II. Perhaps this reservoir was constructed by him. This again proves how kings took interest to excavate tanks in the rural areas, mostly to supply water for irrigation. Similarly, while describing the boundary marks of the gifted piece of land in or near the village Sālachanikā of the Hemvākātāmvā-*vishaya*, the Gautami plates<sup>25</sup> of Gaṅga Indravarman (*cir.* 8th century A.D.) refer to a tank on the south-east, another tank called Kosāmvā on the western side and on the north by the tank named Udaya. The Urlām plates<sup>26</sup> of Hastivarman refer to the Ghōsaṇā tank which was

situated on the eastern boundary of a cultivable tract in the village of Hoṇḍevāka. These epigraphic evidences prove that water of the tanks were used by the village people for irrigating the adjoining plots of land.

Another plate<sup>27</sup> of early Gaṅga king Dēvēndravarman (*cir.* 9th century A.D.) states that one *hala* of land including the water course was given to a *brāhmaṇa*. But the *brāhmaṇa* donee was not allowed to enjoy absolute onwership over the water course. In the inscription it has been clearly stated that during the summer (*grīshmōdaka*) he was to share the water with other families of the locality.

The Koṇḍravā canal (line 15, *uttarēṇa koṇḍrava-khalī*) which has been referred to in the Pherāvā grant<sup>28</sup> of Sāmantavarman (*cir.* 6th-7th century A.D.) was probably used for irrigation purposes by the village people of Pherāvā. Reference to springs also occurs in the Tekkali copper plate<sup>29</sup> grant of Dēvēndravarman (*cir.* 894 A.D.) which flowed by the side of Navatūla village. The villages might have exploited the water of such natural springs to the agricultural fields.

The epigraphical records refer to various trenches as forming parts of the boundaries of the gift lands and villages. The natural trenches often forming boundaries of a gift village have been described as containing water from the nearby hills which were apparently perennial water sources and used in the irrigation of the cultivated land (*parvat-ōdaka*).<sup>30</sup> Trenches played an important part in facilitating agriculture, as it is to-day. References to various district trenches (*vishaya-garṭṭa*) as well as village trenches (*grāma-garṭṭa*) occur in the Chicacole plates<sup>31</sup> of Guṇārṇava's son Dēvēndravarman (*cir.* 7th century A.D.) which existed around the village of Poppāṅgikā. Similarly reference to the existence of *grāma-garṭṭa* (village trench) on the east and *vishaya-garṭṭa* (district trench) on the west of a cultivable tract in the village of Rohānāki occurs in the Narasiṅgapalli plates<sup>32</sup> of Hastivarman (*cir.* 550-650 A.D.). Thus, many similar instances can be cited and it can be assumed that the water of these trenches were utilised by the village people for irrigation.

Again the epigraphic records reveal that lands were often donated with the right to enjoy water. The copper-plate<sup>33</sup> grant from Kapālēśvara in Orissa (*cir.* 5th century A.D.) mentions that the villages of Dāraṇḍā and Khāḷaṇḍalā, in

the district of Yodhā were granted to a *brāhmaṇa* with the right to enjoy its water (line 10, *jalasthala-sahitah*). The copper plate<sup>34</sup> grant found in the record officer of the Cuttack Collectorate mentions that the village of Chandra in the *Mārādā-vishaya* was given to a *brāhmaṇa* with rights over water (lines 33-34, *sajalasthala*). The grant<sup>35</sup> of Kulastāmbha (cir. 10th century A.D.) refers to the donation of the village of Jhāḍabāḍa in the district of Goilla to a *brāhmaṇa* with all rights including right over water (lines 25-26, *sajalasthala*). The above inscriptions prove that in most cases water right was given to individual donees instead of the entire village community. Since the rulers conferred water rights on the donees, it could be reasonably presumed that the State also extended control over the construction of irrigation projects in other village areas. Moreover, it also shows that in the donated villages rulers might not have interfered with regard to its water. But in other villages, there may have existed the state control over water. It again indicates that in some villages the inhabitants might not have enjoyed full control over water. Yet we can cite a number of instances from the land grants to prove that the donees were often allowed to enjoy the rights over water and obviously they utilised it for irrigation.

In spite of the existence of irrigation facilities in early Orissa there were droughts. That agriculture in some areas depended mainly upon rain water has been proved by different illustrations from the epigraphic records. For example, the grant<sup>36</sup> of Tribhuvana Mahādēvī refers to the donation of the village called Koṇtāsparā in the district of Toshala to a *brāhmaṇa* and the motive behind the grant was to bring rain as there was probably drought in the area.

Thus, it is noticed that in early Orissa due to uncertainty of rain often a great stress was attached to the improvement of resources of irrigation in the rural areas. The State as well as the public gave proper attention towards the construction, repair and protection of the irrigation sources. Rural agrarian economy was enriched due to satisfactory harvest produced by the irrigated lands. Since village was the basic unit of economic organisation, the villages attempted to produce sufficient food grains to meet their requirements by watering the fields through different modes of irrigation, viz., wells, tanks, canals, rivers, streams etc., and this has been sufficiently attested by the inscriptions.

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27. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII (1915/16), pp. 212-216.
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29. *IHQ.*, Vol. XI, no. 2, (1933), pp. 300-303.
30. Cf. S. Tripathy, *op. cit.*, p. 427.
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# From Hagiology to History: References from Tirunallāru Inscriptions •

G. Vijayavenugopal

THERE ARE a few inscriptions belonging to the period of the Chōla and Pāṇḍyan kings which contain references.

- i) reflecting Śaiva myths and hagiography, and
- ii) names of persons and places traceable to Śaivite canonical works.

## i) References reflecting Śaiva myths

An inscription of Rājādhirāja I issued in his 35th regnal year<sup>1</sup> mentions a land grant to Śrī Kaṇṭa Kupan *alias* Abhimānamēru Nāṭakap-pēraiyān and to the sons of Śrī Kaṇṭan, Arakaṇ who were performing *āriyak-kattu* (Āryan or Northern dance-drama) in the temple Tirunallāru. These actors will enjoy 3 *vēlis* of land given as tax-free and conduct performance in five acts (*aṅkam*) during Māśi (February - March) *Makam* festival and Vaikāśi (April-May) Viśākam festival, besides the land, the inscription states that the temple treasury will give them 20 *kaḷams* of paddy as *tiru-vilā-k-korru* (food grant for the festival) and oil at the rate of one *nālī* per act for facial make-up and rice for flour (for make-up) at the rate of one *nālī* per act; these two and their descendants will enjoy this land right sharing half each. In this inscription a phrase *viz.*, "*pachchai pati....*" which is unfortunately damaged at the end may refer to "*pachchai patikam*", the hymns of Tirujñānasambandar sung at Tirunallāru which begin with the phrase "*pōgamārtta pūṇmulaiyāl*". "*Pachchai patikam* literally means "green patikam". This name is given to this hymn according to the Śaivite mythology. The myth is narrated by Śēkīlār in the *Periyapurāṇam*, "big tale or legend" *alias* *Tiruttoṇḍar purāṇam*, "Legends of the sacred servants (of Lord Śiva)". According to this legend Tirujñānasambandar (one of the trios of the Bhakti movement in Tamilnadu)

won over the Jains and converted the Pāṇḍys king from Jainism to Śaivism in the debate. The debates were named as '*aṇal vātam*' "debate on fire" and '*puṇal vātam*' "debate on water". The *aṇal vātam* consists in putting the palm leaves on which the respective religious matter was written on fire. The one which does not burn will lead to victory i.e. to the victory of that religion. Accordingly both the Śaivite leaves and the Jaina leaves were put on fire. The Jains were burnt whilst the Śaivites - in this case the Śaivite hymn sung by Tirujñāṇasambandar at Tirunallāru - was not burnt. Hence, the name "green *patikam*" i.e., "unburnt *patikam*". Śēkkilār states that "since the palm leaf which contains the perfect Tamil hymn whose meaning is nothing but Śiva who had Pārvatī on his side, shone green amidst fire" (*Periyapurāṇam: Tirujñāṇasambandar svāmigaḷ purāṇam*, verse 786; published by Tiruppanandal Sri Kasi Mutt, August 1950). Though Śēkkilār has narrated this legend elaborately the earlier references to this is short and crisp. It is given by Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi who was responsible for the compilation of the Śaivite canonical works. In his *Āḷudaiyaṇṇaiyār Tiruvantāti*, a minor work on Tirujñāṇasambandar, he praises Tirujñāṇasambandar as "the one who removed the sorrow of the king (Pāṇḍyan) at Kūḍal (Madurai) after having "cooled off" in the raging fire, the leaf containing (the hymn beginning with) "*pōga mārppai*". That is the first reference to *Pōgamārppai* the beginning of the ten verses sung at Tirunallāru by Tirujñāṇasambandar. Taking the cue from this, Śēkkilār has elaborated the story in his own way. Except these two, there are no other references to evidences in older literature to treat this as historical. According to the legend Tirujñāṇasambandar had not selected himself what was to be on fire. When he was pressed to put some palm leaf containing Śaivite material, he took the bundle of palm leaves containing the verse, he had already composed the song while visiting the Śiva temples at several places and put a rope across the bundle (this is a practice found among the people to get some passage through which the future is predicted). At that moment the verses sung at Tirunallāru came and he left them on fire after singing a new set of ten verses beginning with "*talirīḷa Vālarali*" (*Periyapurāṇam*, op.cit., verse 784) which are very similar to the verses which he

had already sung at Tirunallāru. Now both the sets of verses are taken to be sung at Tirunallāru, though the latter verses were sung at Madurai.

There is an interesting reference to Tirunallāru as a place around Madurai quoted by the author of *Kāllāḍam* of (11th century A.D. a work on *akam* tradition of poetry). He gives a list of place around Madurai viz., Ālavāy in north, Tirunallāvur (middle village), Velliymbalam (Silver temple hall), Nallāru, Indirai, Pañchavanīchcharam, Chennimāpuram where the five sacred letters (i.e. Namaśivāya) were established, Cheran Tiruttali, (temple of Chēran), Senkōttam of Kanni (virgin temple), the abode of the black one (Kariyōṇ i.e., Viṣṇu), the temple of Murūgan at Tirupparankunram and Kūḍal-perumāl (Viṣṇu at Kūḍal). Here Nallāru may refer to a temple at a place since the list gives both the names of temples and places. Nachchinārkkiniyār, a commentator of *Tolkāppiyam* and other literary works give a list of names while commenting on the phrase “*nāṇ māḍak kūḍal*” occurring in a verse in *Kalittogai* (Marutam verse 27) a Saṅgam work. He states that since four *māḍams* (little temples) conjoin together it is called, *nāṇmāḍak kūḍal*; they are Tiru-v-ālavāy, Tirunallāru, Tirumūḍangai, Tirunaḍuvūr”. He also gives another interpretation by saying that there may be Kanni (virgin), Kariyamāl (Viṣṇu), Kālī (Black goddess) and ālavāy. From the above interpretation of Kallāḍar and Nachchinārkkiniyār, one may conclude that they refer to “temples”. As much it has to be pointed out here that Tirunallāru may be a temple/place near Madurai. But it is significant that the myth of Tirujñānasambandar is not connected with this temple/place by both the authors. At present no temple/place exists with the name (Tiru)nallāru near Madurai. It is also important to note that the ten verses, which created a miracle by not burning are not associated by anybody with this Nallāru near Madurai but to the present day Tirunallāru near Kāraikkāl.

However, the Chōla kings have taken up this legend seriously and associated these verses to the present day Tirunallāru near Kāraikkāl. The phrase “*pachchai-paḍi*” instead of referring to the verses may also refer to a village named after this phrase, because another inscription issued during the reign of Kulōttuṅga II in his 3rd regnal year (corresponding to 1135 A.D.) refers to a village viz., “Pachchaippāḍiyanallūr” created

by separating lands from a village called (Etirāṇimaṅgalam)<sup>2</sup>. This proves that a village was created with the phrase "Pachchaippadikam" thus immortalising the legend. Thus the incomplete/damaged phrase "pachchai pati.....", already referred to, may refer to the village/verses. Accordingly the performance mentioned in the inscription already referred to may be an *āriyakkūttu* performed in 5 acts for which lands are given in Pachchaippadikanallūr or it may be an enactment of the Śaiva myth of Tirujñāṇasambandar in the Tirunallāru temple to commemorate that great event.

### Pāṇḍya kings' contribution

References found in Pāṇḍya inscriptions inscribed on this temple at Tirunallāru reveal the equal interest shown by the Pāṇḍyan kings in associating the Tirujñāṇasambandar myth with this temple at Tirunallāru. In fact they went one step further in legitimising this myth with this place. There are some historical reasons too for this. An inscription issued in the 3rd regnal year of the Pāṇḍya king Jaṭavallaba Śrīvallabha (1311 A.D.) (newly found in the temple) states that a group called "*nāḍudaināyaka-p-pēṇḷamaiyār*" have agreed and given an undertaking to the temple administrators to conduct the sea-bath-procession festival by taking the image of Sambandapperumāl-Nāyaṇār (i.e. Tirujñāṇasambandar-nāyaṇār is the reverential word used to denote the Śaivite saints) also along with the Lord of Tirunallāru (Lord Śiva), Tirujñāṇasambandar image was established by one Sundarapāṇḍiya-brahmārayar, a brāhmaṇa commander-in-chief having the name of Sundarapāṇḍya as his title at the Apimutta-nāyaṇār temple in the temple complex at Tirunallāru. For this purpose eight people were appointed to carry the image of Tirujñāṇasambandar and two people were appointed to sing the *paṇ* (probably the verses of Tirujñāṇasambandar). This reveals the increased interest shown by the Pāṇḍyan kings. Here Tirujñāṇasambandar is almost on a par with Lord Śiva himself. Since the legend is connected with Madurai, it is quite natural that the 'Pāṇḍya kings showed much interest in integrating the myth with this temple especially after this area came under their

control after Chōla rule. Besides it is Tirujñāṇasambandar who converted the Pāṇḍyan king Neḍumāraṇ (an ancestor of the present Pāṇḍya king) from Jainism to Śaivism. Pēriḷamaiyār (occurring in the inscription) designates a group of agriculturists, who enjoy the privilege of cultivating the temple lands. It is interesting to note that this group is called *nāḍuḍai-nāyaka-p-pēriḷamaiyār* after the phrase *nāḍuḍaiya-namperumāṇ* (referring to Śiva) in the same hymn viz., *pōkamārtha* sung by Tirujñāṇasambandar. This is another attempt by the local agriculturists to localise the myth.

Another inscription (newly found) issued in the 5th regnal year of Jaṭāvarmaṇ Sundara Pāṇḍya (1322-23 A.D.) found in this temple states about the king's order to the administrators of Tirunallāru temple assigning some lands for food offering to Sambandapperumāṇ-nāyaṇār (i.e. the image of Tirujñāṇasambandar) while he is taken to the sea-bath procession. This shows the continued interest of the Pāṇḍyan kings in integrating the myth with this place and temple.

ii) References to names of persons/places traceable to Śaivite canonical works:

Tirunallāru inscriptions also reveal the impact of names/places used in Śaivite canonical works.

a) *ēḍedirittāṇ tirunandavaṇam*<sup>3</sup>:

Ēḍedirittāṇ, "he who left the palm leaf against (the flow of stream)" refers to Tirujñāṇasambandar's legend that when he put the palm leaves (containing his verses) in the river they went (upstream) thus proving the greatness and supremacy of Śiva and Śaivism. This took place at Madurai after the feat of palm leaf containing *Tēvārm* hymns of Tirujñāṇasambandar came out unburnt. Thus a flower garden (*tirunandavaṇam*) is named after one of the titles of Tirujñāṇasambandar near Tirunallāru.

b) *Pōgamārtta pūṇmulai vēḷāṇ*: (newly found inscription)

Again in Tirunallāru in an inscription, an official is named

after the consort of the presiding deity (at Tirunallāru). Pōgamārttapūṇmulaiyāl is the name of the consort of Lord Śiva at Tirunallāru which in turn happens to be the beginning phrase of the ten verses sung at Tirunallāru by Tirujñānasambandar. Thus the legend is localised in a different manner by adopting it as a name of a person.

c) *Pōgamārtta-pūṇmulai-bhaṭṭaṇ*: (newly found inscription)

A temple priest (bhaṭṭaṇ) also gets this phrase as his name.

d) *Kāviyaṅkaṇṇi paṅkaṇ*:

Not only the phrase found in Tirujñānasambaudar's verses are taken but also phrases found in verses composed and sung by the other *Tēvāram* hymnologist viz., Sundaramūrtti-nāyanār. *Kāviyaṅkaṇṇi paṅkaṇ* (she whose eyes are like lilies) is the phrase used by Sundaramūrtti-nāyanār while praising Lord Śiva at the temple Tirunallāru. Thus a phrase used in the hymn on Śiva at Tirunallāru is adopted as personal.

A *vēḷāṇ*, an official, has also the same phrase as his name viz., *Kāviyaṅkaṇṇi vēḷāṇ* (*Kāviyaṅkaṇṇi* means "she who has eyes like lilies")

Thus a study of the references about the myths popular in Śaiva tradition reveals not only the impact of these in temple myths and people's lives but also the efforts taken by the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍyan kings in legitimising the myths with certain places and temples by creating endowments to conduct rituals etc. By such acts they tried to make these legends as "historical". Prof. Francois Gros states on Sēkkilār's efforts in writing *Periyapurāṇam* (using the handloom imagery): "thus the shuttle may run between the various threads loaded in turn with history, legend, mythology of pious tall stories.<sup>4</sup> This statement fits very well with the efforts made by the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍyan kings to legitimise the myths. Thus hagiology becomes history !

## Notes and References

1. *AREp.*, 1965-66, No. 437.
2. *Ibid.*, 1968-69, No. 107.
3. *Ibid.*, 1965-66, No. 455.
4. *Tēvāram*, Volume I, Jñāṇasambandar: Towards reading the *Tēvāram* p. XIII, Institute Francais D'Indologie, Pondichery - 1984.

# Muñgthala Copper-plate Inscription of Bandhurāja

T.S. Ravishankar

THIS COPPER plate inscription preserved in the State Museum at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan was copied in the year 1998-99 and edited here<sup>1</sup> with the kind permission of the Director (Epigraphy). The above plates were originally found at Muñgthala in Badmer district, Rajasthan.

The set belongs to *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara* Bandhurājadēva, a ruler of Paramāra dynasty of Bhīmāl or Kirāḍu branch.<sup>2</sup> It contains two plates with writing on one side in both the plates. The plate measuring 20 cms X 12 cms has a small ring connecting both the plates and there is no seal soldered to the two ends of the ring. The first plate contains fourteen lines and the second contains fifteen lines in which the last line is written from the middle of the plate. It is written in Nāgarī characters quite regular for that period. The language is Sanskrit. Except the two words *tat=putraḥ* occurring between the end of verse 1 and the beginning of verse 2 in the preamble portion and the grant portion, the text is in verse.

The charter begins with the symbol for *siddham*, salutation to goddess Chaṇḍikā and a verse adoring Lord Śiva. The beginning verses eulogise the rulers from Sindhurāja to Bandhurāja. It refers to Kirāṭakūpa, a place from where it was issued. It then refers itself to the reign of *mahāmaṇḍalēśvara-ādhipati* Bandhurājadēva, who issued the grant. The object of the inscription is to record the grant of a village by name Māmkata, after making it free from all encumbrances and with all its privileges to goddess Chaṇḍikā (temple) located in the village. The above grant was made by Mālhaṇa-dēvī, wife and queen of Bandhurāja, for the sake of defraying expenses connected with the worship of goddess Śrī Chaṇḍikā. There is also a description of the four boundaries of the grant village. It is dated in Vikrama saṁvat 1239, Māgha sudi 14, Monday corresponding to 17th January 1082 A.D. The

record was written by Drūṇiga, son of Pāri Dēvachandra.

A comparative study of the text of the Kirāḍu stone inscription of Sōmēśvara of Vikrama 1218 and the present copper-plate charter reveals that some of the verses occurring in the stone inscription are quite similar. Particularly noteworthy are verses 9 to 14. These are the conventional verses euologising the kings of this branch of the Paramāras. The composers of the stone and copper plate inscriptions are however different.<sup>3</sup>

The primary importance of the charter lies in the fact that it introduces a new ruler *mahāmaṇḍalēśvar-ādhipati* Bandhurāja, the son and successor of Sōmarāja, who can be identified with Sōmēśvara, of the Kirāḍu inscription.<sup>4</sup> By adding one more ruler to the genealogical list, this charter pushes further the history of the Paramāras of Bhinmāl or Kirāḍu branch. As the Kirāḍu inscription of Sōmēśvara dated Vikrama 1218, was the last known record of this line of rulers, P. Bhatia, H.V. Trivedi and others concluded that this branch came to an end with Sōmēśvara i.e., Sōmarāja of our record. To support this view, Dr. H.V. Trivedi refers to a Kirāḍu inscription dated Vikrama 1235 (1178 A.D.) which says that Kirāḍu was governed by the Chāhamāna *mahārājaputra* Madanabrahmadēva, who was a feudatory of the Chaulukya Bhīma II. On the basis of this evidence, he has suggested that Sōmēśvara might have died without any male issue or it may be that his descendants lost the confidence of the Chaulukya overlord. It is conjectured that due to his repeated revolts against the members of the imperial house, Sōmēśvara might have been driven away by his overlord Bhīma II and replaced by another of his subordinates who was none other than Madanabrahmadēva.

P. Bhatia based on the Sundhā hill inscription, which refers to Āsala, presumes that he might have been a successor of Sōmēśvara<sup>5</sup>. Even D.C. Ganguly has made different observations about the successor of Sōmēśvara and the continuance of the family.<sup>6</sup>

But with the discovery of this charter, it has laid at rest all the speculations and uncertainties about the successor of Sōmēśvara and thus now all the loose ends are sealed. It is presumed that Sōmēśvara ruled from 1145 to 1165 A.D. The present inscription is dated in Vikrama saṁvat 1239 (1181 A.D.). So, Bandhurājadēva, the son and successor of Sōmarāja

might have ruled from 1165 to 1185 A.D. if the conventional period of 25 years is given.

Another great significant factor of the record is that it mentions clearly the name of the successor of the king Sindhurāja as Va(Bha)bhuka. The Kirāḍu inscription of Sōmēśvara dated Vikrama 1235 is the only inscription so far discovered, which furnished the entire geneology of Paramāras of Kirāḍu Branch. The record is worn out and particularly the portion mentioning the name of the successor of Sindhurāja has suffered damage. H. V. Trivedi has restored the name as Dūsala (or Ūsala?), the successor of Sindhurāja in the above mentioned inscription.<sup>7</sup> Further Trivedi says "it is most unfortunate that the very portion which appears to show his relationship with Sindhurāja is lost". Though the relationship is not clearly stated in our record, the name Bhabhuka figures quite clearly as the successor of Sindhurāja.<sup>8</sup>

Of the two place names mentioned here, one is Kirāta-Kūpa, the place from where the grant was issued and that is too well known and has been identified with Kirāḍu. Another place name Māmkata, the grant village has not been identified yet.

## TEXT

Metres Vv 1-7 and 9 *Anuṣṭubh*; V. 8 *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*.

### First Plate

- 1 Siddham<sup>10</sup> || Ōm namaḥ Chamḍikāyai || Sa Dhūrijjati-jaṭā  
- jūṭō jayatām vijayāya va(vai) | yasyai kapa(ba)lita-  
bhrām -
- 2 tir - vahaty - adyāpi Jāhnavī || Simdhurāja(jō)  
mahīpāla(lō) Vabhbhuka (kō) - dha(tha) vā smṛitaḥ ||  
(1) Rāṇukaś=ch=ēti vi -
- 3 jñēya(yō) sva-kulē(lō) dha(ddha)-ri(ra) ṇagaś=chaḥ(cha)  
[yaḥ\*] ||2||[\*] Tat=putraḥ<sup>11</sup> || Dēvarāja-sarō(mō) mukhyai  
(khyō) kīrtti-naidharma-nirmmi(mma)la[ḥ\*] ||[\*]
- 4 yēna dūrvvāra-vīryēṇa bhūṣitaṁ Maru-maṇḍalaṁ  
(lam) ||3||[\*] Dharmm=ādhārād=abhūt tta(ta)smān=  
Maṇḍalīkō(ka) [ś=cha\*] Dhamdhukaḥ ||[\*]
- 5 Maṇḍalīka(kō) Kṛishṇarājō mahā-śavda(bda)-vibhū-

- shitaḥ ||4[|\*] Tat putraḥ Sōchchharāj-ākhyah(khyō)  
khyāti-yuktō raṇ=āṁgaṇē [|\*]
- 6 bhūshaṇam Maru-dēsasya tyāga-kalpadrumō= bhavēt  
(‘bhavat) ||5[|\*] Tasmād= Udayarāj=ākhyō mahārāja-sut  
=āgraṇī [h \*] sou(śau)rya
- 7 dhairya-vidhir-yasya Maṁḍalika-pad=ādrikah ||6[|\*]  
ā-Simdhō(dhu)rāja-bhūpālāt=yivi(bhuvi) putra-kramāt  
-punas-ta (punaḥ | ta)smāt=Udaya-rā
- 8 j=ākhyāt Sōmarājō bhavēt=nṛi (‘bhavan=nṛi)paḥ ||7[|\*]  
Satyēna Yudhishtīrō Dinakarō atyugra-pratāpēna  
jō(yō) gām-
- 9 bhīryēna mahōdadhi [r\*]=kshititalē tyāgēna Karṇna  
(rṇṇa)ś=cha ya[h\*]|| Pārtha[s\*]=sajjita-kārmukēna  
Madanōrūpēna nityā(tyō)
- 10 guru[r\*]=vidyā-dāna(nē) vilāsa-bhōga-sahitam Śrī-va(Ba)  
nd hurājaś = chiram(ram) ||8[|\*] Vam(Bam)dhurāja(jō)  
kshitau khyātaḥ Sōmarājah sutō
- 11 mahī(hīm) [|\*] sou(śau)rya-dhairya-mahādānair-udhṛi  
(ddhṛi)tō yēna bhūtalam(lam) ||9[|\*] Ady=ēha Śrī  
Kirāṭa-kūpē sakala jagad-adhipatiṁ Bhavā -
- 12 nīm patim (bhavānī-patini) sakala-suru-āsura-makūṭa-maṇi-  
kīraṇa-saṁghaṭṭa gharshita-pāda-padma- yugalam bhaga-  
vanta [m\*] Mahādēvam-pa[m\*]-
- 13 ch-ōpachāra-pūjayā samabhyarchya chaturdaśa- mahā-ma-  
-(na)dī-nirmmal=ānīta=pānīya=kṛita-snāna-saṁsāra-  
sārātā m vichimtya
- 14 nalinī-dala-tala-gata-jala-lava-taralata-jīvitavyam (tam)  
ch=ākalpa(lya) Aihik-āmushmika-phalam cha-āṅgikṛitya  
bhuvī sad=gu-

## Second Plate

- 15 ṇa-grām=āvali-samalamkriyamāṇa-pāñcha-mahā-śabd=āla  
mkāra-virājamāna samasta-prasast=ōpēta-mahā-maṇḍa-  
lēśvara-
- 16 rādhipati-śrī Vā(Ba)ndhurāja-dēvō śāsanam prayachchhati  
yathā || Śrī Kirāṭakūpa-maṇḍala-pratibaddha Māmkatā-  
nāma-grāmam
- 17 sva-śi(sī)mā-paryantam nava-nidhāna-sahitam sa-vṛiksha-  
mālā-kulam s=ōdraṅga-sa-parikaram sa-

- 18 daṁdō-daś=āparādha-sahitaṁ taḍāga-kūpa-kūpikā- sahitaṁ  
tatra saṁtiśṭamāna-Śrī-Chaṇḍikā Māmkaṭē Chināma  
bha -
- 19 ṭṭārikāya(yai) udaka-pūrvvaṁ āchandr=ārkkam yāvat  
sva-dharmma-vṛiddhayē grāmō=yam śāsanē[na\*]  
pradattaṁ || grāmasy=āghāṭanā[ni] ya-
- 20 thā|| pūrva-dik Āḍela-grāya(ma) - śī(sī) māyām śī(sī)mā  
| dakṣiṇā-dik tathā grāma-sakta-śī(sī)māyām Loḍhakē  
śī(sī)-
- 21 māḥ|| paśchimā-dik Vri(Bṛi)-hathalē - sīmā|| Uttarā-dik  
Sāvīyāsa-kshētrēshu śī(sī)mā | ēvam=ādi chaturā -
- 22 ghāṭa(tā)nām=ābhyanṭarē(am)| pradattaṁ | Mahāmaṇḍa-  
lēśvara-Rāṇa°-Śrī Bandhurāja-dēvīya (dēvasya)-su-patnyā-  
rājñī Śrī Mālhaṇa dē-
- 23 vyā Māmkaṭē chētya-Bhaṭṭarakāyā[h\*] pūjārunitvā  
(pūjām kṛitvā) grāmō-yam pradattaṁ (ttam) || Va(Ba)  
hubhir=vasudhā bhuktā-rājabhi[h] Sagar=ā-
- 24 dibhir=yasya yasya yadā bhūmī(mi)-[h\*] tasya tasya  
tadā phalam (phalam) ||1[|\*] Rāma-Rāghava- Rājendra  
saptakalpa-smarāmy-aham [|\*] na dṛi
- 25 shṭō na śrutah kv=āpi svayam dattāppa(pa)hārahā  
||2[|\*] Sva-dattām para-dattām va dānam yō harē[n\*]  
=nṛipah[1\*] shasthi-varsha-sahas(s)rāṇi vi -
- 26 shṭāyām jāyatē kṛimih ||3[|\*] Asmad-vamśasthō yō=nyō  
yah kaśchin=nṛipati[r\*]=bhavēt [|] =tasy=  
āham karalagrō(gnō)=pi śāsanam
- 27 vyatikramēt ||4[|\*]<sup>13</sup> Saṁvat 1239 Māgha śudī 14 Sōmē  
śāsanam=idam likhit=ēti ||
- 28 ||0|| -Ētat mahāmaṇḍalēśvara[rē]ṇa śrī Vam(Bam)  
dhurājadēva-mataṁ || Maham° Śrī-Pāvaḍa-mataṁ |  
[mānahī dilambu]
- 29 Likhitaṁ mi(i)dam maham° Dēvachandra-putra-pūri°  
Druṇigēna ||

### Notes and References .

1. This is being included in the Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy for 1998-99.

2. This is the second copper-plate charter of this branch. Another copper-plate charter known to us is Rōpī plate inscription of Dēvarāja, Vikram [1059], see *C.I.I.*, Vol. VII, pt. II, pp. 318 ff.
3. *C.I.I.*, Vol. VII, pt. II, p. 328.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
5. P. Bhatia, *The Paramāras*, p. 185, n.
6. D.C. Ganguly, *History of Paramāra dynasty*, pp. 340 ff.
7. *C.I.I.*, Vol. VII, pt. II, p. 326.
8. *Ibid.*,
9. From Impressions.
10. Expressed by the numerical figure 90.
11. After verse 2 there is brief prose passage *tat=putrah*.
12. Read<sup>o</sup> *pānīyēna snānam kṛtvā*
13. The verse is metrically defective. The correct verse is as follows:

Mad-vañśe para-vañśe vā yaḥ

kaśchin = nṛpatir = bhavēt |

Tasya = āhañ kara-lagnaḥ syām yō

mat-kīrtir = na lumpati ||

All the four imprecatory verses are in *Anuṣṭubh* metre

# A Note on the term *Kṛitārtha* of Kannada Inscriptions

C.T.M. Kotraiah

AT HAMPI, five short Kannada inscriptions contain the Kannada term *Kṛitārtha*, used in a peculiar context. All these inscriptions are carved on natural boulders seen by the side of the man-built ancient steps leading upto the Mātāṅgēśvara (Virabhadra) temple on the top of the Mātāṅga hill at Hampi.

I. These inscriptions<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

- 1 Ānaṁda saṁvatsarada Śrāvaṇa śu l Bā
- 2 Rāmaya maga Piriya Nāgaṇa Virūpā
- 3 kshadēvara śikharaḥ nama(skāra)va māḍi(kru)
- 4 tā(r)tthanāda
- 5 ..yagirēya Kāmpaṁṇana ma
- 6 ga Malapa ..... krutā(rttha)nāda<sup>2</sup>

That is, on the first of the month of Śrāvaṇa of the year Ānanda (number of the year has not been given), one Piriya Nāgaṇa, son of Rāmaya did *namaskāra* (obeisance) to the *śikhara* (tower over the sanctum) of Virūpākshadēvaru (temple) and became a *kṛitārtha*. It continues to mention in similar context, that another person named Yerigeya Malapa, son of Kāmpaṇa also became a *kṛitārtha*.

II.

- 1 Piṁgaḷa saṁvatsarada ēkādaśi Bhānuvāradalu Mattara
- 2 sara maṁgāya magaḷu Rāmāyi Virū(pā°)kshadēvara
- 3 kaḷaśavanu kaṁḍa namaksā(skā)ravanumāḍi  
krutārthhāda(ḷu).
- 4 Rāyaṁṇa sumḍada Dūbhappana maga Mayanappa  
Mayi
- 5 lappana tāyi Sātāyi Sātāya moṁ
- 6 vū Mallapa Vūlapa Māyaka Māyakana magaḷa
- 7 Pūvāyi Kallāyi Niṭūra Dēvaṁṇa.<sup>3</sup>

That is, (on the date mentioned, without the number of the year) one Rāmāyi, daughter of Mattarasara Maṁgāya, saw the *kaḷaśa* (pinnacle) of Virūpākshadēvaru (temple), did

*namaskāra* (obeisance) and became *kṛitārtha*. It also makes simple mention of, from the next line (line 4), some other names of persons as Rāyaṇṇa, Mayanappa, son of Dubhappa, Sātāyi mother of Mayilappa, Vūlapa, Māyaka, Pūvayi daughter of Māyaka, Kallāyi Nitura Dēvaṇṇa. It should be specially noted that in the case of these latter names (persons), there is no mention of the term *kṛitārtha*.

The other three inscriptions<sup>4</sup>, while continuing to narrate identical intentions, mention different names of persons who became *kṛitārtha*.

All the above five inscriptions, though they state the names of the cyclic years (Ānanda, Piṅgaḷa, Kālayukti, Raudri and Āṅgīrasa), days and also *tithis*, they are not verifiable in the absence of the mention of the years in any era. Yet they can be assigned, on paleographic grounds, to 15th-16th centuries.

Now from the term '*kṛitārtha*', it can be inferred that it indicated a sacrifice of life by these devotees of god Virūpāksha, from that height or place where the recordings are seen and that the devotees after paying obeisance to god's *kalaśa* or *śikhara* might have sacrificed their lives by observing fasting till death or falling from that great height or by any other means which cannot be decidedly made out in the absence of further details. In this connection, we may recollect the terms like '*sallēkhana-vrata*', '*sallēkhana-vidhi*<sup>5</sup>', '*muḍipu*<sup>6</sup>' etc., prevalent amongst the followers of Jainism, which clearly establishes the fact that the devotees gave up life by continuously and strictly restraining from taking food, water, etc. Those terms are considered as *pāribhāshika* terms. Similarly, this term '*kṛitārtha*' too might be a *pāribhāshika* term, noticed for the first time and that too in only five inscriptions of Hampi. And all those persons referred to, in the inscriptions were the devotees of god Virūpāksha (Śiva) of Hampi, which point is clearly stated.

In support of the above inference, we may quote a poem from the contemporary Kannada poetical composition titled '*Śivatatva-Chintāmaṇi*'<sup>7</sup> by Lakkaṇa-daṇḍēśa who was a minister of the Vijayanagara king at Hampi, specially so during the reign of Dēvarāya II.

.....Mātangi-giriypud-a-dar-āgrdi  
Haranalli kāmītava bayasuvar banni pura-

Harana nēmadolu nimm-abhimatavan-ivenemṇ  
 -urumudadi karevaṁte niṁda Vīrēśvaraṇa .....<sup>8</sup>

*Sandhi* : 38 poem : 239.

That is, god Vīrēśvara (Vīrabhadra idol) stood on the top of that Mātāṅga hill as though inviting those devotees of Hara (Virūpāksha) to go to him (at that height) and he was there to ensure or help them, as per the order or appointment of Hara (Virūpāksha) to attain their wishes, desires or end (salvation).

That is to say, those devotees of god Virūpāksha climbed up that Mātāṅga hill, reached the presence of god Vīrēśvara (Vīrabhadra) and from there they paid obeisance, (did *na-maskāra* to god Virūpāksha after seeing the *śikhara/kalaśa* and attained (*mōksha*) by giving up their life. From this, it can be said that such a practice might have been prevalent during the Vijayanagara days, amongst the devotees of Virūpāksha (Śiva) of Hampi.

Here it may also be noted that if the purpose of the concerned devotees, mentioned in the inscriptions, was only to see the *śikhara* or *kalaśa* of the Virūpāksha temple for becoming a *kṛitārtha* there was then no necessity to walk up to that far off distance (about 700 metres or 2310 feet) and climb up that steep Mātāṅga hill (about 97 metres high or 320 feet). Because one can easily go up the terraces (about 20 feet/height) of the *maṇṭapas* of Virūpāksha temple which are built around the *śikhara* and not only see the *śikhara* and *kalaśa* from there at close distance but also touch it with hands and pay obeisance with greater devotion. There is provision of masonry steps leading up to the terrace of that temple within the temple complex, in the north-west corner. Further, the *śikhara* is not too high since it looks as though built on the formal terrace of the temple complex. Therefore, even now any one can go up the steps, to the terrace and not only see but also touch the *śikhara* with hands. Hence, the devotees referred in the inscriptions, might have climbed that steep, rugged and high hill of Mātāṅga only with the purpose of attaining salvation or *mōksha* (*kṛitārtha*).

In this context, the meanings for the term *kṛitārtha*, as given in the dictionaries can be considered.

1. *Kittel's Kannada-English Dictionary*.<sup>9</sup>

It gives the same meaning as given by M.M. Williams "a man who has attained an end or object, .... etc., and for the term *kṛitārtha* it gives "causing an end; bringing to an end.... the end or result of actions, destiny; Yama ...." etc.

## 2. Sir Monier Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary:<sup>10</sup>

The very first explanation given there is 'one who has attained an end or object or has accomplished a purpose or desire ....' etc.

## 3. Philip Brown in his Telugu-English Dictionary:<sup>11</sup>

It gives the meaning for the term *kṛitārthuḍu* as 'gainer, one who is successful' and further in Telugu language as '*kōrika ēḍerinavāḍu* and for *kṛitārtha*, 'success, etc.

The above explanations given in the dictionaries also support the above interpretation that the term *kṛitārtha*, at least in the context of the above inscriptions, conveyed the connotation, end (of life) or salvation (*mōksha*) from worldly life.

In this connection we may also note an aphorism taken from the *sthalapurāṇa* of Śrīśailam which is popularly used and displayed at that place on buntings etc, which reads as '*Śrīśaila śikharam drishtvā punarjanmō na vidyatē*'.

Further, the expression in the texts of those inscriptions too should be specifically noted. According to that, all those recordings were got engraved by the third person or persons and after the incidents (attainment *kṛitārtha*). For instance, inscription<sup>12</sup> No. 48 states that the lady, Rāmāyi become '*kṛitārtha āḍaḷu*' and No. 47, states Piriya Nāgaṇa '*kṛitārtha āḍanu*'. Those expressions '*āḍaḷu*' and '*nāḍanu*' indicate clearly that the first person referred was not in existence at the time of the engraving. So, those recordings were brought into being by other living persons who might have been his or her kinsmen, relatives, associates, patrons or admirers. In support of this, the above referred inscription No. 48 may be examined wherein, after the intended subject matter has been stated, some other names, which include males and females are also engraved, such as Rāyaṇṇa, Mayanappa, mother Sātāyi, etc., who might have been closely associated with the first person.

Their names are just stated and no other details are given as if they were witnesses or signatories. Here it may be remembered that in the cases of erecting *vīragallu* (Hero-stones), *māsti-kallu* (Satī-stones), Jaina '*nishadi-kallu*' etc., similar practice was common and frequent, as we are well familiar. And often, there were sculptured representations along with the inscriptions. But in the case of those Hampi inscriptions strangely there are no sculpture, not even line carvings. And these are the only five inscriptions which have that term, so far noticed. More information may come to light when some more are discovered at Hampi or elsewhere.

It is also possible that these inscriptions represent a situation when persons referred to were of untouchable class and on that account they did not have the privilege to enter the *prākāra* or premises or to go on to the terraces or the temple to have *darśana* of *śikhara* of *kalaśa*. Even under such circumstances, as it is possible even now, one can have a good look at the *śikhara* and *kalaśa* standing on the Hēmakūṭa hillock, adjoining which is the temple of Virūpāksha built. And that Hēmakūṭa hillock is outside the *prākāra* of Virūpāksha temple, to the south.

This term appears to have been in limited use, in the above five instances only. Nearly five hundred inscriptions both long and short ones have been noticed from the Hampi-Vijayanagara site and published.<sup>13</sup> But no where else, the use of this term is observed. Here, we may consider another example of terminology noticed in the dated inscriptions of the Cuddapah region, of 15th-16th century where the epithet '*ajāti-Vīraśaiva*' has been used in five inscriptions only and in that region only.<sup>14</sup>

Now it is for the epigraphists, etymologists and linguists to further examine and decide about the acceptable connotation for that term or usage.

### Notes and References

1. a) C.S. Patil and Vinoda Patil : *Inscriptions at Vijayanagara* (Hampi), Mysore, 1995 Nos. 248 to 253, p. 72 to 74 and  
b) *Vijayanagar - Progress of Research, 1983-84*, Mysore, 1985, Nos. 47 to 52 p. 44-45 (for texts).
2. *Ibid.*, (b) No. 47 p. 44.
3. *Ibid.*, (b) No. 48, p. 44
4. *Ibid.*, (b) Nos. 49, 50, 52, p. 44 & 45.

5. *Kannada Nighaṇṭu*, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore, 1995, Vol. VIII. p. 841l
6. *Ibid.*, Bangalore, 1993 Vol. VII, p. 7238.
7. S. Basappa (ed.): *Śivatatva Chintāmaṇi* of Lakkana-danḍeśa, Mysore, 1960.
8. *Ibid.*, sandhi: 38 poem: 239.
9. Kittel's *Kannada-English Dictionary* (Rev) Madras, 1977, p. 490.
10. Monier Monier Williams: *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Rev.) Delhi, 1993 to p. 303.
11. Philip Brown: *Telugu-English Dictionary*, Madras, 1903, p. 306.
12. *op. cit.*, (2 & 3 above).
13. *op. cit.*, 1. (a)
14. *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, Vol. XIII, Nos. 46, 80, 217 and *Inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh*, Vol. II, pt. I, No. 228, p. 142.

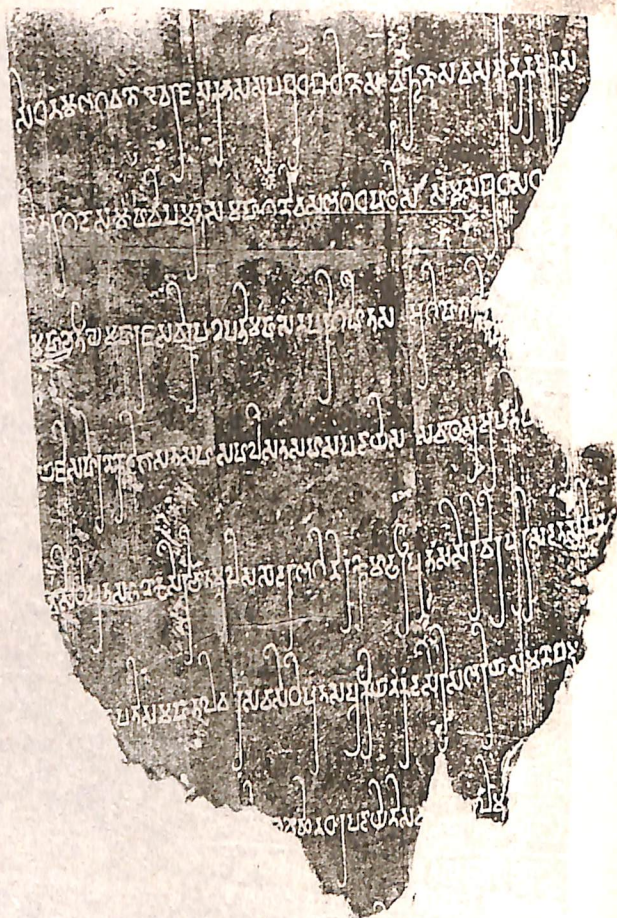
## Appendix

### Plates

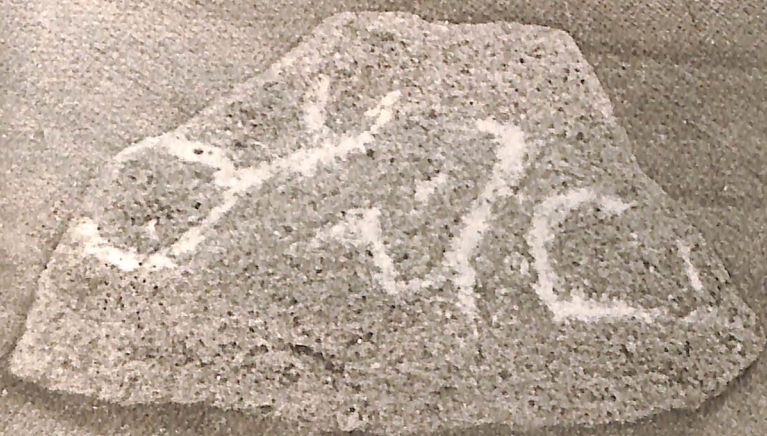
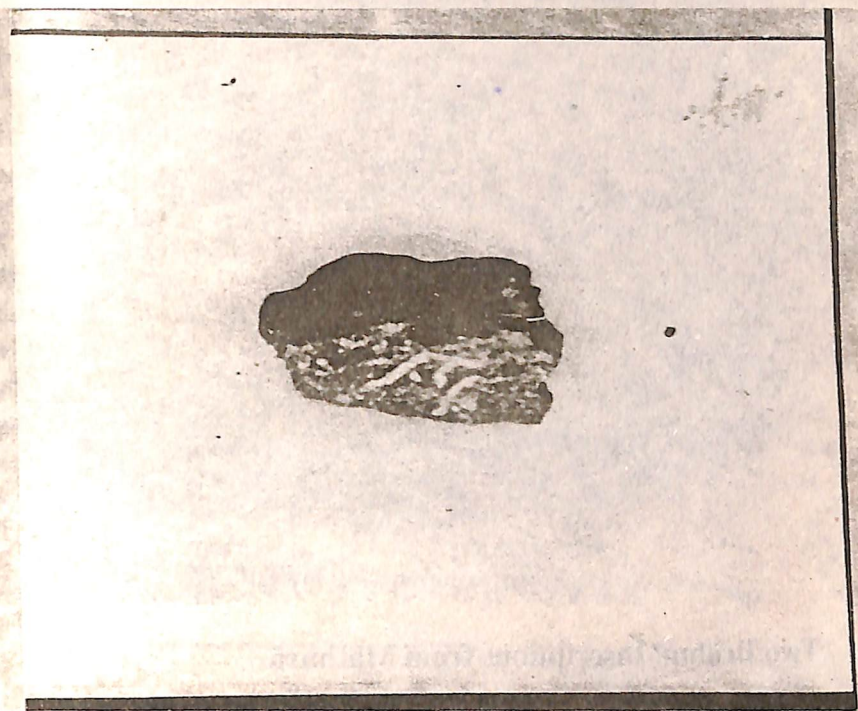
#### Āsandi Copper-Plates of Ganga King Arasāṇe



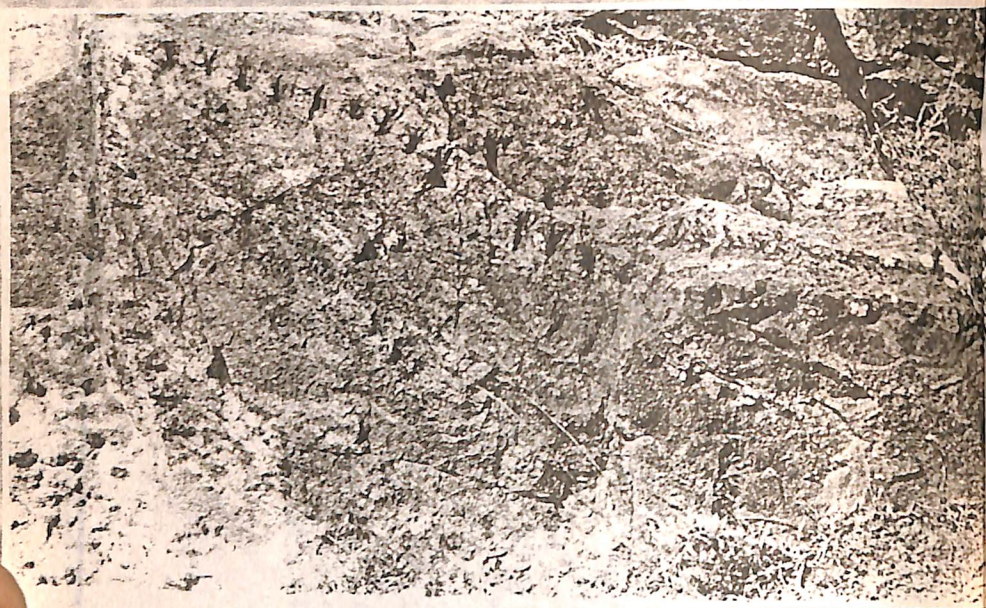
Āyaka-Pillar Inscription from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa  
—A Fragment



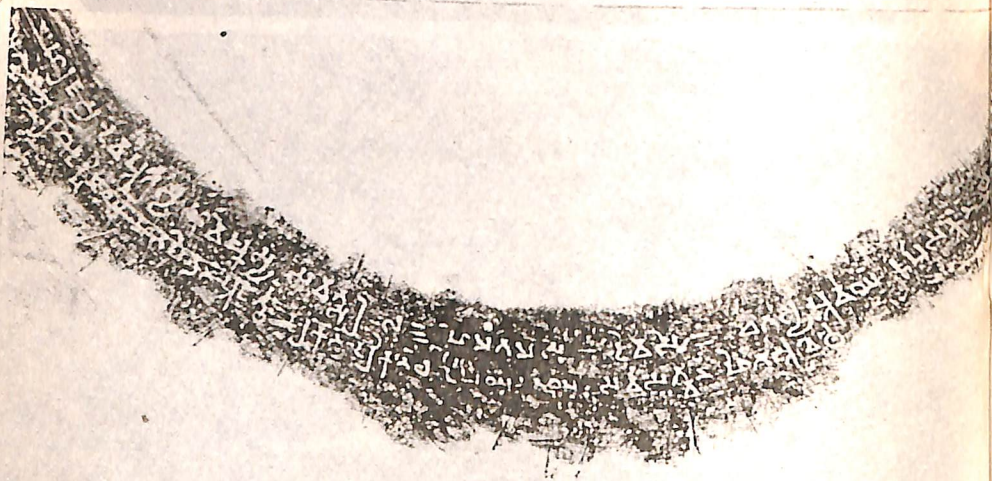
Tamil Brāhmī Graffiti from Northern Śrīlaṅka



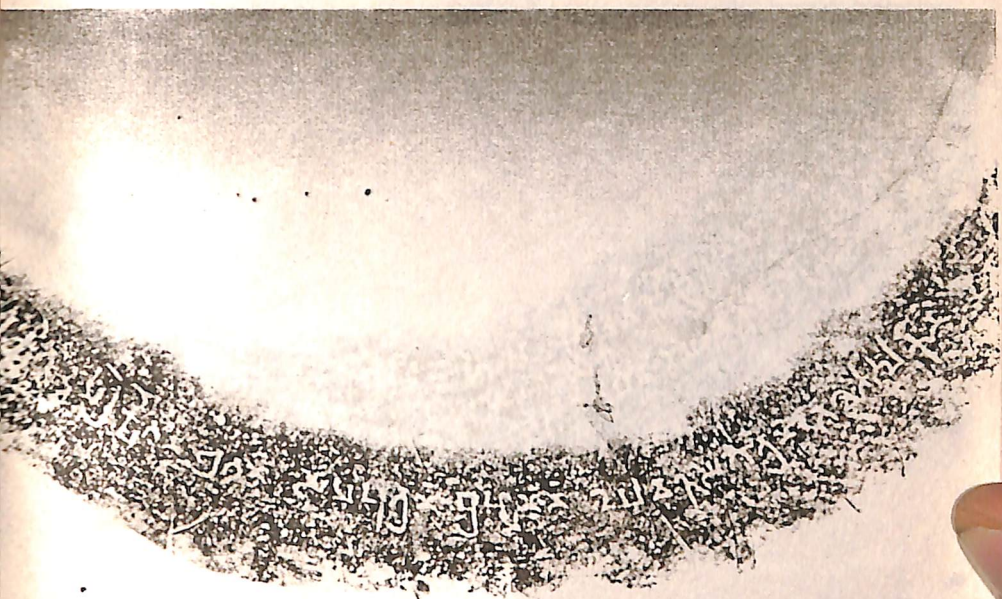
### A Langudi Hill Inscription Referring to Aśoka



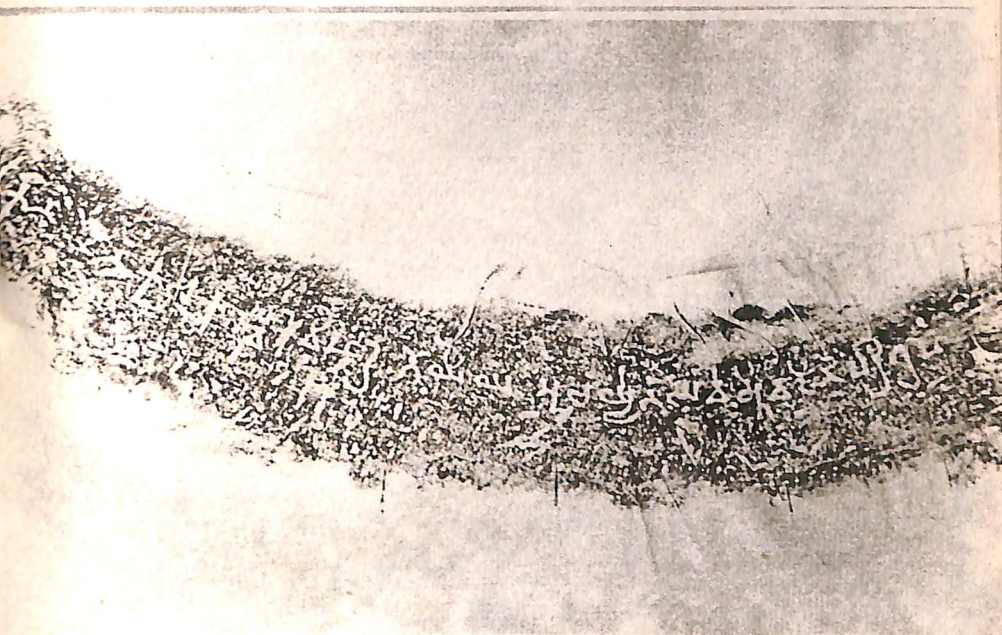
### Two Brāhmī Inscriptions from Mathurā



1(a) Brāhmī Inscriptions of the time of Huvishka



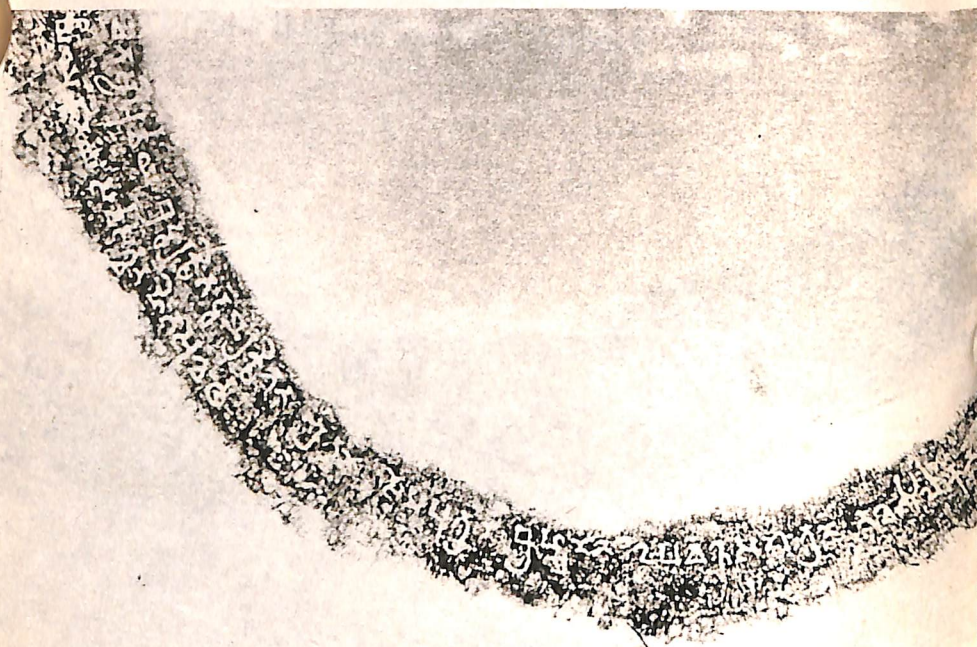
1(b) Brāhmī Inscriptions of the time of Huvishka



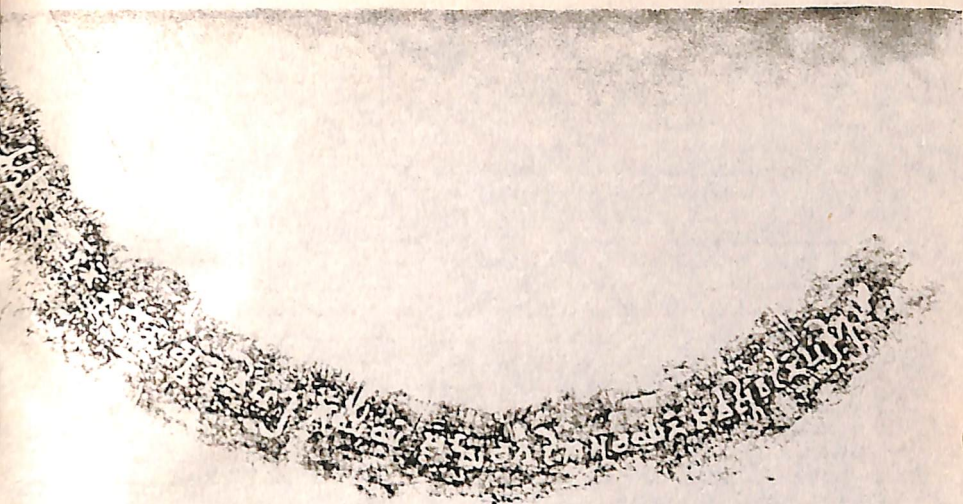
1(c) Brāhmī Inscriptions of the time of Huvishka



2(a) Brāhmī Inscriptions of the time of Huvishka



2(b) Brāhmī Inscriptions of the time of Huvishka



2(c) Brāhmī Inscriptions of the time of Huvishka

## A New Copper-Plate Grant of North Koṅkan Silaharas

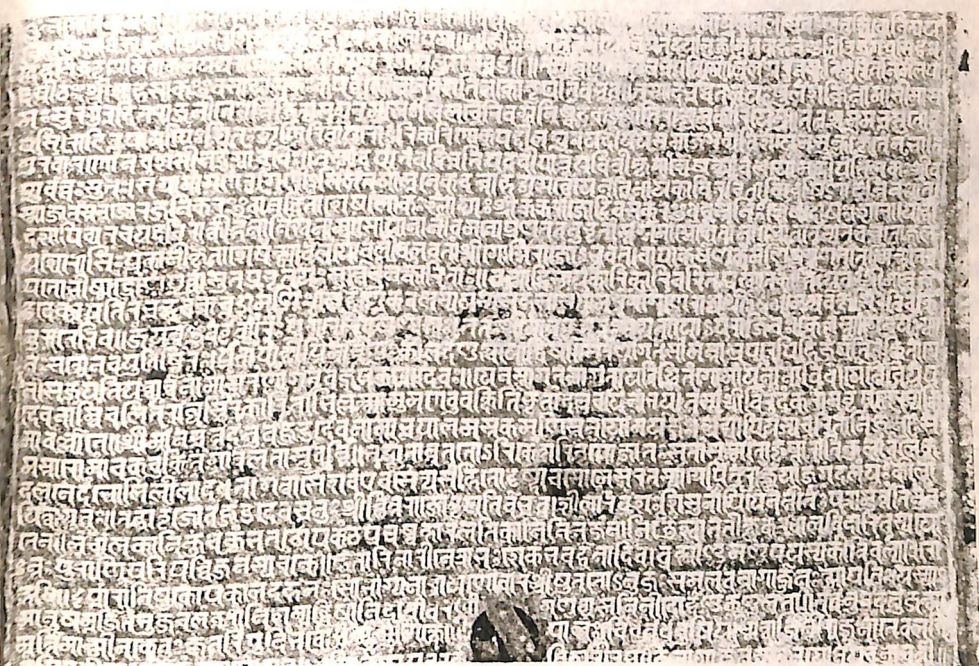


Plate 1

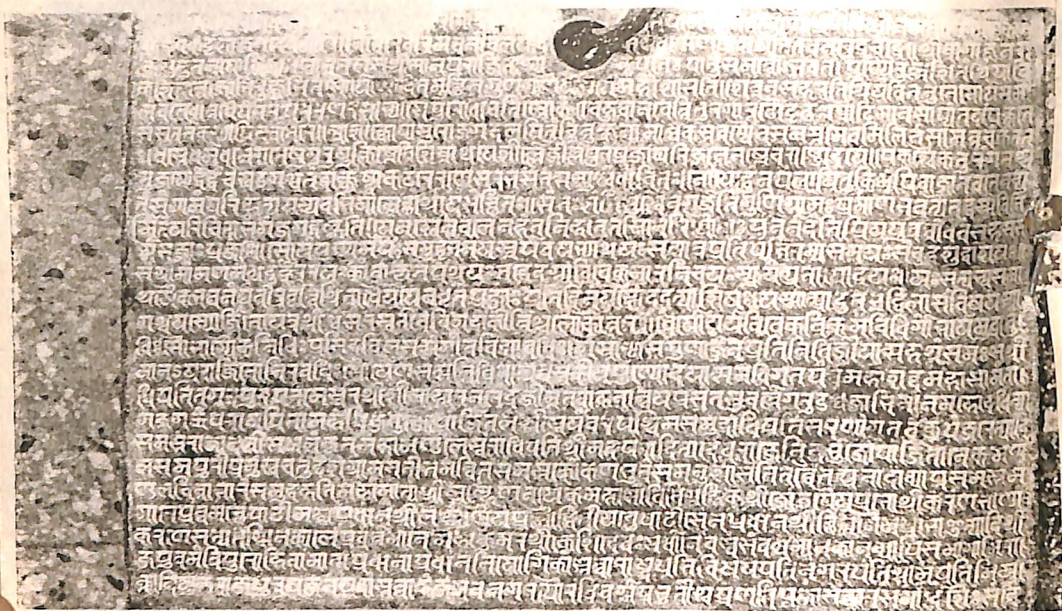


Plate 2(a)

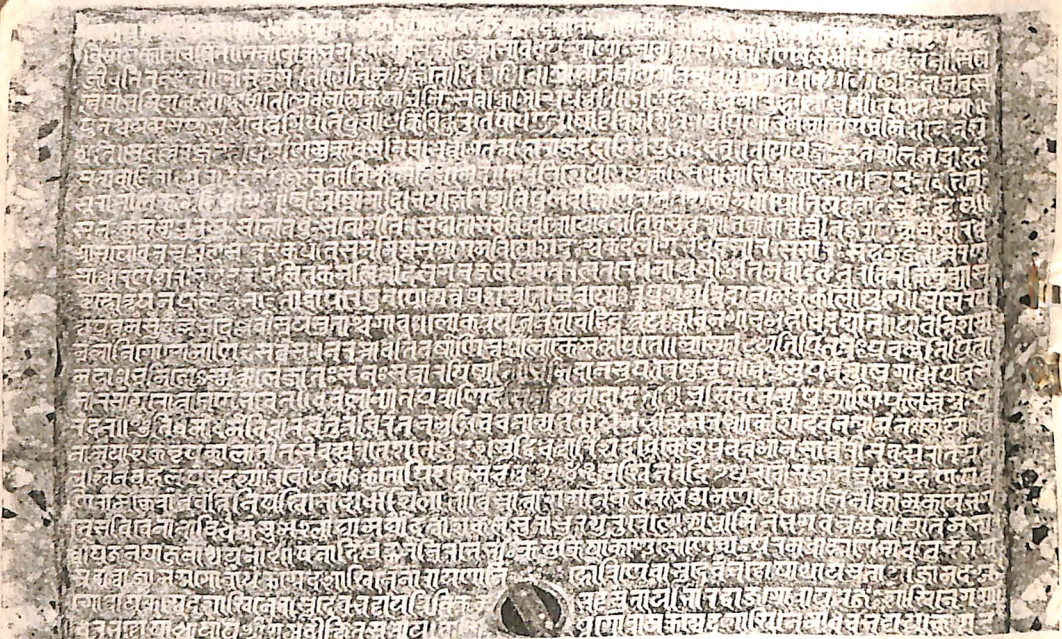


Plate 2(b)

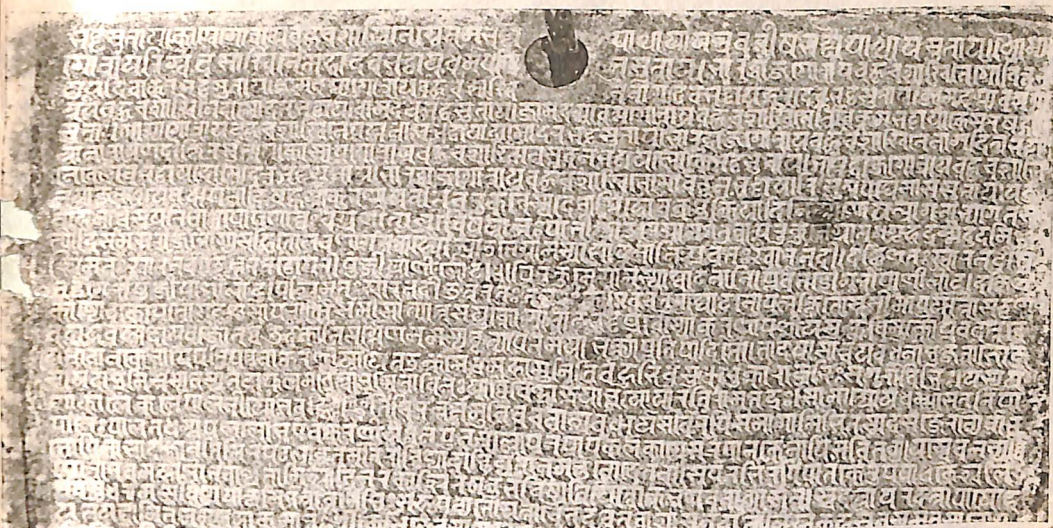
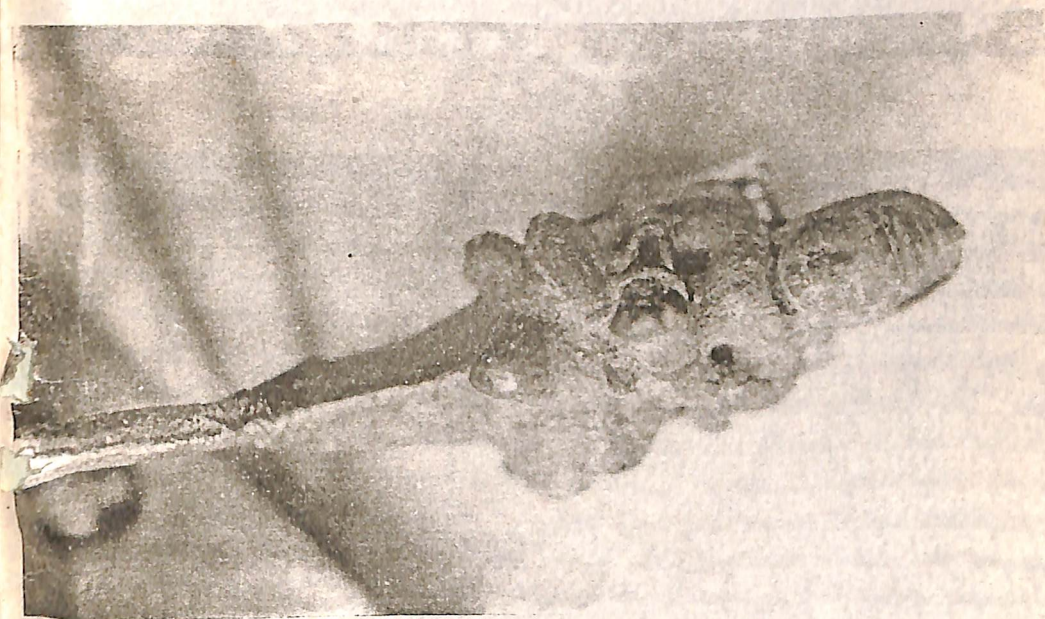


Plate 3



Seal

## Mungthala Copper-Plate Inscription of Bandhurāja

॥ उ नमः शंकराय ॥ सवृद्धिस्तु तां ॥ राजायता विजयाय वा यस्यैकपतिव  
 र्वहम द्यौः पिहो द्वौ ॥ १ ॥ सिंधु रा जा मही मा त्व तं मे कं से द्या च्या तं ॥ राण कं च ति  
 यं से कु ला धरा णि गो शुभ ॥ २ ॥ ते नृ नः ॥ दवरा डं सरा सु त्रि की र्ति ने धु र्म नि मि  
 ने दु वी र वो यो लो चि तं न र्म भू तं ॥ ३ ॥ धर्मा भरा द तं तस्या भे दलो का धरं धु र्म  
 इ त्थो कं प्र रा डा नं दो श मु ति र्म वि तं ॥ ४ ॥ नृ पु त्र मारु रा डा सु ॥ स्था ति यु क्त रा ण  
 ॥ ५ ॥ ज क प रा णा या ग क त्वा दुं ला र्ज व त् ॥ ५ ॥ न म्मा डु र य रा डा र द्या म हा रा ड मु ता माली  
 र्थ वि धि यं म ड ली क प दा धि कं ॥ ६ ॥ अ भि म रा ड त्पा ला वि वि पु त्र क ण पु न ध म्मा डु र  
 र द्या त्मा म रा डा त व दृ प ॥ ७ ॥ यः स्या त्म न यु धि धि रा दि न क रा अ मु म्भ ना प ना  
 र्थि ल म हा र धि क्षि ति त ल द्या ग न क र्थ य ॥ ८ ॥ पा र्मि क्षि त क र्मु क्त म दाना रा प  
 र्थि द्या स न ति लो ता म स हि तं श्री नृ पु रा ड शि र ॥ ९ ॥ तं पु रा ड क्षि त रा णा त्मा म रा जः  
 नी लो ध वे धे न हा रा ने र वृ त्त य न नृ न लं ॥ १० ॥ आ द्य ह शी क र ट क ण स क ल ड ग र्ध प ति  
 र्ति स क ल पु रा ड र मु क्त र म णि क रि ण म प ट प र्थि त प द प द्यु ग ले न ग वं त म हा र  
 प तार म ड या म म रा र्थि र व दृ श म हा र दी क्षि त्वा नी त पा नी य रु त्त म्ना न र्म रा म्भ र तं वि  
 ली न द न ल ग त ग ल ल व त र ल त र जी वित र्थ वा क ल प र्दि ता शु धि क ण ल वी गी र नृ नृ नि स

Plate I

गामली समलं कियमाणं पवमहाययलंकारं विराजमानं मम प्रशमापुनमहामंडल  
 धपति श्री कंधु रा जदवाशमनं पयतु नित्यया ॥ श्री किराट रूप मंडल पति वृद्ध मा कता नाम या  
 श्री मा पर्व त्त व नि धु न स हि तं त द व द्या व ल न द्या य व डं म ड क मा ला कु स ल्मा ड ग म प रिक र  
 द था प रा ध स हि तं त द्या ग रूप रूपि का स हि तं त व स ति शु मा न श्री व र्धिका मी कं ल ची ना म  
 र का या रु व क प्र वी त्र वं द कि या व क ध र्ध वृ द्वा य था ला यं शो म ल प द नं ॥ द्या म था पा य  
 प्र वं दि कु आ ड ल द्या य श्री मा र्थी श्री मा र क णा दि क्षि ता थो म स क र्णी मा यो त्वा ड क  
 ॥ १ ॥ प थि का दि कु वृ द्वा य लं श्री मा ॥ उ त्र रा दि कु मा ति या स क्ता व पु श्री मा ॥ २ ॥ व मा दि व त  
 म ना म रा त र प द त्री म हा र्म डाल थु र रा ण श्री कंधु रा ड दि वी य धु प च्या रा डी श्री मा ल  
 मा क त ल य न द्या र का या प्र जा र ति द्या थो मा यं प द नं ॥ वृ द्वा नि र्व सु म धु का रा ड नि म ग  
 ने र्ध य य य द्य व जी न म्भ त म्भ त दा फ ल ॥ ३ ॥ रा ध रा य व रा ड डं स प्र क्त म्भ रा य द्य न  
 नृ त क पि म्भ य द्या प द्या र क थार वृ द्वा प र द्या वा द नो ला द र प र्थि व र्ध म द्या थि  
 जा य त क मि ॥ ४ ॥ अ व द्य द्या थो मा यः क थि नृ प ति त व त्था र्क र ला थि थो म न  
 कु ल न ॥ ४ ॥ से व व १ २ ३ ४ मा घ शु दि १४ ला न शो म नृ मि र्द ले वि वा न ति ॥ ४ ॥  
 ५ नृ म म म ड ल थु रा ण श्री कंधु रा ड व त नं ॥ म र्म श्री पा व ड म नं ॥ म र्म श्री पा व ड म नं ॥

Plate II



